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**Terms of Reference**

**National Evaluator for Lao PDR National Assembly Strategic Support Project *(National Consultant)***

Title : National Evaluator for Lao PDR National Assembly Strategic Support Project (NASSP)

Reporting to : Assistant Resident Representative and Head of Governance Unit at UNDP Lao PDR as well as Head of Governance Programme at SDC Lao PDR

Duty Station : Vientiane, Lao PDR

Duration : 15 Working Days from 1 June to 31 July 2015 (output based consultancy)

Contract Type : Individual Contract (IC)

**Background Information:**

The Lao PDR National Assembly (NA) has an ambitious legislation programme for the current cycle of 2011-2015 as well as the next cycle of 2016-2020, and is facing challenges in realizing its legislative duties as the overall majority of draft laws originate from the executive. The NA also needs to strengthen and implement its critical mandate to represent the people, advocate for improvement in the quality of life, and articulate the needs of the people.

Given the past support by UNDP to the NA in Lao PDR, a new project called the National Assembly Strategic Support Project (NASSP) was launched in July 2014. Co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UNDP, the NASSP aims to improve the capacity of the NA to be able to effectively review and deliberate draft laws, conduct oversight, and represent constituents as an important aspect of the NA’s contribution to democracy and development in Lao PDR.

The NASSP is expected to deliver the following three key outputs:

* To enhance capacities of National Assembly committees in conducting their legislation-making role;
* To strengthen institutional and human resource capacities for an effective National Assembly support service; and
* To increase dialogue promoted between the National Assembly and Citizens to strengthen citizen’s participation in decision making.

UNDP in partnership with the NA of Lao PDR has devised this initiative, building upon the previous project results with an overall objective of strengthening the capacity of the NA to fully exercise its mandate. The methodological approach taken in the selection of particular delivery tools included both the learning and the awareness raising/advocacy aspects. This in turn influenced obtaining of a pro-change environment and identifying champions of transition both among the Members of the NA and support staff, thus ensuring sustainability and institutional knowledge.

While the project implementation period set in the project document is from July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2017, this evaluation comes towards the end of the first 12 months and serves as the basis to determine whether to continue the Project beyond the first year of implementation. This evaluation is supported jointly by the SDC and UNDP in Lao PDR.

In this light, UNDP and SDC are hiring a National Evaluator to assess efficiency, effectiveness and relevance with which outcome level of changes: societal, behavioral and institutional are being achieved of the project implementation.

**Objective**

The objective is, on the one hand, to assess the Project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and how outcomes were achieved in the first year of implementation of the project and , on the other hand, to provide recommendations (incl. prioritization of objectives/activities) for further programming development and/or the continuance/discontinuance of the Project beyond the first 12 months of implementation.

Should the Project be recommended to continue, the National Evaluator together with an International Evaluator will also validate the relevance of the planned action in the rest of the implementation period.

**Use and Management Response**

UNDP evaluation policy, approved by its Executive Board in 2009, requires all independent evaluations to have a management response. According to the policy, UNDP management, in close consultation with National Assembly, NASSP, and other stakeholders, will prepare a management response to the recommendations and follow up action points.[[1]](#footnote-1) This plan will note the responsible parties for each follow-up activity, as well as the timeframe by quarter, to allow for clear tracking of progress on the corporate public website, Evaluation Resource Center (erc.undp.org).

**Evaluation Ethics**

The evaluation must be undertaken in accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, which are available here: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>

**Scope of Work**

UNDP Lao PDR invites applications from qualified consultants in order to perform the evaluation of the NASSP. This evaluation should assess relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project. It should assess what works and does not work and why, highlight intended and unintended progress and/or results, and provide strategic lessons to guide decision-makers and inform stakeholders.

Led by the international consultant, the national consultant is expected to hold meetings and discussions with National Assembly’s concerned departments and committees as well as other relevant stakeholders in the execution of the mission.

In relations to the above-mentioned aspect, the Evaluator will review, analyze and provide conclusions and recommendations on the following:

* Evaluating effectiveness (e.g. the degree to which the project activities listed in the Project Document and in accordance with the revised work plans have been successfully implemented and desired outcomes are being achieved);
* Evaluating efficiency (e.g. the approach to project management, including the role of stakeholders and coordination with other development projects in the same area)The status of the corresponding UNDP Country Programme outcome and progress vis-à-vis Swiss Cooperation Strategy Outcome and estimate the degree of project's contribution to it;
* Evaluating relevance of the project in view of (1) parliamentary development in Lao PDR, and (2) enabling environment for citizen and civil society organizations’ participation/engagement in decision-making process;
* Identifying and evaluating lessons learned from the first year implementation;
* Identifying, as appropriate, relevant changes (operational, management, etc.) that are needed for the project to achieve its overall objectives and desired outcomes within the given timeframe;
* Provide specific recommendations for further improvement in addressing gender and ethnicity dimensions with the project intervention;
* Overall conception and delivery of the final report.

**Team Composition**

This evaluation will be conducted by a team of two consultants: an international evaluator as the lead and a national evaluator as a support role. With the support from the national evaluator, the international evaluator will take the lead in developing a methodology for the assignment that reflects best practices and encourages the use of participatory and consultative approach.

And the two consultants will be responsible for delivering the required outputs to meet the objective of the assignment and will work under the overall guidance and supervision of the NASSP National Project Director and under the direct supervision of the Head of Governance Unit at UNDP Lao PDR and Head of Governance Programme at SDC Lao PDR.

**Evaluation Questions**

For the basis to determine whether to continue this support beyond the first 12 months of the project implementation, the evaluation should address the following questions among others (to be finalized by the evaluation team after the scoping phase):

**Relevance**

* To what extent was this support to the National Assembly thus far based on clearly identifiable development needs as outlined in the government’s strategies, international obligations and others?
* How does the NASSP’s work link to other development initiatives, implemented by the UN, other Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, or government agencies?

**Effectiveness**

* To what extent were the Outputs of the NASSP, and the indicators used, successful in guiding the support to have maximum positive impact on the National Assembly’s work? How might this be improved in future?
* What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended outputs?
* How far was the International Cooperation and Project Management Secretariat mechanism, its objective, set-up and rules and procedures, effective in fulfilling the intended objectives and needs of the users? How has its effectiveness compared with that of other funding modalities?

**Efficiency**

* To what extent was the response designed to maximize the efficiency of the NASSP’s support to the National Assembly?
* How cost-effective and time-efficient was the implementation by this Project of its activities and outputs in the evaluation period? What measures were taken to ensure competitiveness?

**Policy**

How well is the project placed to effectively influence policy reform?

**Partnership and Coordination**

* How well does the Project coordinate and harmonize its work with other actors in the sector?

**Sustainability**

* To what extent has the National Assembly increased its ownership during the period in question? What impact has this had on external support?

**Monitoring & Evaluation and Risk Management**

* To what extent did the results framework allow for relevant monitoring of progress and impact of interventions? How could this be improved, with particular reference to the findings regarding relevance?

**Methodology**

* The evaluation approach has to respond to standard international practices in project evaluation;
* Review of project documentation, monitoring records and progress and other relevant reports;
* Initial meeting with UNDP and project team of NASSP to agree the specific design and methods for the evaluation, what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives. Agree on the evaluation questions that will need to be answered, given limitations of time and extant data;
* Prepare inception report with evaluation matrix;
* Discussions with key staff involved and project beneficiaries both at central and local levels to assess project's relevance and effectiveness of project implementation take note of their perceptions of accomplishments and potentials for further development and provide suggestions for management response to evaluation findings. Objectively verifiable data should be collected whenever available, to supplement evidences obtained through interviews and focus group discussions;
* Schedule of interviews will be coordinated with UNDP Head of Governance and NASSP project team;
* Focus on the general evaluation criteria; and
* Prepare the Final Report with Executive Summary.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Duties and Responsibilities**

* Provide all necessary support to the international evaluator with implementation of the assignment objectives, including translation and interpretation during the consultancy
* Ensure that country-specific conditions and learning approaches are well understood and considered in the work conducted by the mission;
* Provide country context perspectives about socio-political economy in Lao PDR;
* Assist with the focused group discussions at all levels;
* Attend the briefing and debriefings with partners and government agencies;
* Be responsible for report writing covering his /her areas of competence.
* Provide overall facilitation and assistance to the team leader in terms of meetings and interviews with key stakeholders;
* Translate the inception report
* Translate the draft evaluation report with a list of preliminary findings to gather feedback from stakeholders for the national debriefing for programme stakeholders in Vientiane
* Translate the final evaluation report
* Full time availability for the in-country Mission duration (10 working days)

**Desk Review**

A following set of information sources about the project will be made available to the Evaluators:

* Project documents;
* Progress reports;
* Annual Review Meeting minutes
* Key materials produced by the project; and
* Deliverables and Timeline.

***Expected Deliverables***

It is expected that the evaluation deliverables will be completed within 15 working days between June and July 2015. The in-country work, which includes a maximum of 3 days /2 nights for field visits, will take place between 3rd and 12th June 2015.

1. Inception Report (Day 1)

It should contain the description of the assessment methodology, data analysis methods, key informants, issues to be evaluated, and work plan. The inception report shall outline the proposed division of labor between the international and national evaluators, ensuring that it reflects the scope of each TOR. Note that the methodological approach will be devised by the team as a stand-alone document which will set out the approach and design for the evaluation in line with the UNEG/G (2010)1[[3]](#footnote-3).

1. Draft Evaluation Report (Day 9)

After compiling all relevant data, a draft evaluation report shall be produced, capturing preliminary findings and recommendations. In addition to the meetings and consultations held with all stakeholders, the team is expected to analyze all relevant information sources including the annual progress report, project document, and key materials produced by the project amongst others.

Please note that the Implementing Partner (National Assembly), UNDP, and SDC reserve the right to provide comments on the draft report prior to approval.

1. Debriefing Workshop/Presentation Material (Day 10)

At the end of the in-country mission, it is expected that the team organizes a debriefing workshop to present preliminary finding and recommendations.

1. Final Evaluation Report (Day 15)

Upon receiving comments from all stakeholders, the international consultant will finalize the deliverables with inputs from the national consultant.

Please note that the Implementing Partner (National Assembly), UNDP, and SDC reserve the right to provide comments on the draft report prior to approval.

***Indicative Timeline***

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| **Expected Deliverables** | **Responsible Party** | **Estimated Time Frame** | **Place** |
| Inception report including work plan and evaluation matrix | Evaluation Team | Late May or early June  (1 day) | Home based |
| In-Country Mission: Vientiane Lao PDR | Evaluation Team | June 3-12  (8 days) | Lao PDR |
| Draft Evaluation Report | Evaluation Team | June 11  (1 day) | Lao PDR |
| Facilitate an internal workshop or focus group discussion about the lessons learned & future direction.  Lead the national debriefing for programme stakeholders / presentation of the initial findings to gather feedback from stakeholders | Evaluation Team | June 12  (1 day) | Lao PDR |
| Review of Draft Evaluation Report | NA, NASSP, SDC and UNDP | June 30 | Concurrent action |
| Final Evaluation Report, including the executive summary | Assessment Team | July 1-15  (5 days) | Home based |

**Evaluation Report Criteria**

The criteria of utility, credibility, and relevance/appropriateness will be used for assessing the quality of the evaluation report:

* The report has to be written in clear and proficient language (English);
* The Executive Summary should be an extremely short chapter, highlighting the evaluation mandate, approach, key findings, conclusions and recommendations;
* The information in the report has to be complete, well-structured and well presented;
* The information in the report has to be reliable i.e. well documented and supported findings;
* The information in the report has to addresses priority or strategic information needs;
* Recommendations have to be concrete, realistic and implementable; and
* Gender equality and ethnicity diversity perspective should be taken into account.

In developing its Evaluation Report, the Evaluator must attempt as far as possible to incorporate all inputs received during the stakeholder engagement process. This report must strive to present a clear picture of NA’s current efforts at meeting its constitutional tasks. It must highlights areas that require attention and makes concrete recommendations on the steps that are required to address these issues

The evaluation has to be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. Code of conduct is enclosed as Annex II and constitutes integral part of this ToR.

**Skills and Competencies**

* Excellent analytical skills;
* Demonstrated strong knowledge about parliamentary development;
* Displays ability to synthesize research and reach empirically based conclusions on related subject;
* Strong writing skills;
* Proven capacity to produce reports;
* Displays capacity to provide experienced advice on best practices;
* Possesses knowledge of inter-disciplinary development issues;
* Focuses on result for the client and responds positively to feedback;
* Good application of Results-Based Management;
* Good communication, coordination and facilitation skills;
* Consistently ensures timeliness and quality of work;
* Treats all people fairly without favoritism;
* Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
* Demonstrates integrity by modeling ethical standards;
* Ability to deliver when working under pressure and within changing circumstances;
* Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude ; and
* Excellent interpersonal skills.

**Qualifications and Experience**

The below stated criteria shall apply to an International Evaluator.

***Education:***

* Bachelor’s degree or higher in relevant field of political science, law or another relevant field.

***Work Experience:***

* Minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience at the national or international level in providing consultancy work related to parliamentary development; and
* Experience in evaluating and monitoring technical cooperation and development activities and projects

***Knowledge:***

* Strong knowledge of parliamentary development would be an asset;
* Strong knowledge of data collection and analysis as well as report writing
* Familiarity with the UN(DP) evaluation policy, norms and standards; and
* Knowledge in the use of computers and office software packages and handling of web based monitoring systems.

***Language:***

* Fluency in both Lao and English in speaking and writing

***Application Procedure:***

The following are steps for on-line application:

Submit the application (as listed below) via UNDP web site www.lao.undp.org under the heading “Work with us/Vacancies”:

The application should contain:

1. Technical Proposal:

(i) Cover Letter – Explaining why they are the most suitable for the work; and

(ii) Provide a brief methodology on the approach to the work and how it will be conducted (maximum 1000 words).

2. Financial proposal;

3. Personal CV in the form of P11 that includes past experience in similar projects and e-mail contacts of three referees (section 26 & 29 in P11).

The above information should be included in the following documents:

* Offeror’s Letter to UNDP confirming Interest and availability for the Individual Contractor (IC) Assignment. Document can be downloaded from the following: http://www.lao.undp.org /download/ic/Confirmation.docx (only PDF will be accepted); and
* Updated and signed P11, in PDF format, containing e-mail contacts of three referees (section 26 & 29). P11 can be downloaded from the following: http://www.lao.undp.org/download/ic/P11.doc.

Additional Information:

* Individual Contract (IC) will be applicable for individual consultants applying in their own capacity. If the applicant is employed by any legal entity, IC would be issued upon submission of Consent letter from the employer acknowledging the engagement with UNDP. Template of General Conditions on IC could be found on:

<http://www.undp.org.lao/download/General%20Conditions%20IC.docx>;

* Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA) will be applicable for applicants employed by any legal entity;
* In the case of engagement of Civil servants under IC contract modality a no-objection letter should be provided by the Government entity. The ‘no-objection’ letter must also state that the employer formally certifies that their employees are allowed to receive short-term consultancy assignment from another entity without being on “leave-without-pay” status (if applicable), and include any conditions and restrictions on granting such permission, if any. If the previous is not applicable ‘leave-without-pay’ confirmation should be submitted.

1. The template for a management response can be seen on page 16 of UNDP’s Evaluation Policy, available here: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/958 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to the elements outlined in the quality criteria for evaluation reports (Annex I constitutes integral part of this ToR). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. United Nations Evaluation Group Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference & Inception Reports [↑](#footnote-ref-3)