

Terms of Reference

BASELINE STUDY FOR THE PROJECT

“ENHANCING RESILIENCE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES THROUGH CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTION AGRICULTURE IN BOKEO PROVINCE, LAOS”

Plan International Laos

1. ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

We strive to advance children’s rights and equality for girls all over the world. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children’s rights from birth until they reach adulthood and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

Plan international Lao PDR (Plan Laos) is seeking the submission of a technical and financial proposal to conduct a **baseline study** for the project Enhancing resilience of Ethnic Minorities through Climate Change Adaption Agriculture in Bokeo province, Laos”. This project will be implemented in close cooperation with the local partner NGO, *Maying Humair Pattana* - MHP (Women Together in Development), and provincial and district partner agencies. The main donor of the project is the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and it is coordinated and co-financed by Plan International Korea.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project follows from the REAL project which was effectively implemented in three OLD Districts Pha Oudom, Meung, Houayxai over 44 mth (2021 – 2024). The current project will be implemented in all five districts and include the remaining two NEW districts, Phak Tha and Ton PHeung. The project will be implemented over 33 months from 02 April 2024 to 31 December 2026.

Up until 10 years ago, villages in these areas had difficult access and traditional livelihoods and cultures remained in place. Access is rapidly changing, and villagers increasingly need to integrate with the broader socio-economic changes impacting the districts and province as a whole. This is particularly significant for young women and men to provide perspectives for sustainable livelihoods within their own communities.

The project builds on the results of the REAL project using the same theory of change. In line with the Lao government strategy, the project approach is based on the targeted promotion and establishment of value chains. This will involve enabling farmer groups to assess their interests and needs, with the project then supporting them to adjust production to respond to market requirements. This also includes understanding the gender dynamics within these communities and trade practices in order to address gender bias that may create barriers for women to also gain the benefits of agri-business processes and practices. A gradual strengthening of the relationship between farmers' groups and local traders will be established, leading to increasingly formalised trade relations. This will benefit both producers and traders with the potential to establish unique and in-demand products for their district. To underpin and consolidate the benefits to be gained from these direct interventions, the project will support a land-use planning methodology (FALUpAM) and alignment of local trading procedures with current regulations.

To enable on-going and expanding service delivery for improved livelihoods throughout each district and the province, the project will build capacity of relevant district offices (e.g. DAFO, DOIC, DONRE and LWU), and of MHP itself. In particular for DAFO of each District, the project will be provided training for improved production systems and application of Value-Chain Development methods. The Extension Management System (EMS) will be introduced for DAFO to plan, manage delivery and report on results, and so assist them to provide effective service delivery, according to their roles specified in the 9th Party Congress.

To enhance social inclusion, the project will apply a series of additional activities aimed at gender balance, inclusion of youth, safe immigration and familiarity with Lao Law.

3. PURPOSE OF THE BASELINE

The purpose of the baseline is to measure the status of the project indicators at the beginning of the project. This includes to design tools to measure indicators in a Monitoring Framework. The information on the indicators will later be used to measure and monitor the project progress against the set indicators over the course of the project implementation, e.g. in mid-lines, end-lines and/or final evaluations.

The overall objectives of the assignment are to deliver a baseline study:

- Establish disaggregated baseline level data (sex, age, disability), according to indicators in the project log frame. (Annex 1).
- Review and identify detailed indicators that the project team can continue to use as tools for going project management throughout the life of the project.
- Work with the MHP and Plan Laos teams to establish clear and achievable annual and cumulative targets for the indicators over the full project period.

3.1 Assessment of Baseline Values for Project Indicators

The BLT will carry out field assessment to assess the status of project indicators according to those listed in Table #1.

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators
Impacts Strengthening community resilience and enhancing quality of life through climate-resilient agriculture for ethnic minorities in Bokeo Province, Laos	Poverty rate of each district in Bokeo province (%)
Outcomes 1. Ethnic farmers improving their livelihoods from climate resilient agriculture production and engagement in market systems	1.a. Average income increase per HH after participating the project (USD, KOICA indicator)
2. Local government providing services to improve climate resilient livelihoods and social well-being for rural HHs	2.a. Number of staff of the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) who are able to prepare, deliver, and report on annual plans to improve livelihoods and well-being of rural HHs (#)
Outputs 1.1 Households understanding market potentials for climate resilient products/techniques	1.1.a Number of community representatives taking part in participatory value chain assessments (#)
	1.1.b Number of households that are actively applying climate resilient products and production technologies (#)
1.2 Farmer Organizations(FO) that established to support and enable ongoing expansion of climate resilient agriculture.	1.2.a Number of FO's formed (#)
	1.2.b Number of farmers participating in informal or formal farmer organizations(#)
1.3 Youth led micro-enterprises established to expand value chains for climate resilient agricultural production	1.3.1 a No of micro-enterprises established by youth and still operating by end of the project (#)
2.1 DAFO to enable to plan, manage and deliver annual extension plans for climate resilient agricultural production	2.1.a Number DAFO staff trained in skills to advise on climate resilient agricultural production (#)
	2.1.b Number of established participatory land use plan (FALUPAM)(#)

2.2 Local governments providing services to improve community resilience and social well-being	2.2.a Number of duty bearers who have completed, inclusion of disabilities, safeguarding, child protection, and safe migration(#)
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In addition, the BLT will assemble basic background data to be provided as Annexes.

- basic implementation plans of other major donor projects operating in Bokeo, (i.e. GiZ, Lux Development, Plan, SAMDA, CAMKID) to provide a simple list of target villages and key activities, and basic provincial/district data (no of DAFO staff) in recognition of their activity.
- Staffing composition of DAFO in each district
- List of priority products for each District and province.
- Recent monthly export rates for last 12 mth of the four focus products

4. USERS OF THE BASELINE

An external consultant or team is required to lead the design, planning, data collection and analysis of baseline research for this project. This will be used to

- (a) assess the final achievements of the project, and
- (b) with the various indicators and methods contribute to development of an M&E system for MHP to management and monitoring of progress of the project throughout its life.

5. METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The baseline study will include two components (a) a desktop review of relevant secondary data, and (b) field work component to collect primary data for analysis.

The consultant and/or team is expected to work closely with Plan staff to develop the study plan including baseline survey design: detail on methodology, sample size and parameters, data collection technique, data cleaning, data analysis, baseline report and debriefing meeting.

The consultant will design and propose appropriate methodology and tools to be agreed on with Plan Laos. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis is expected to stem from the survey results. The consultant will propose an appropriate sampling methodology and size that is statistically valid and cost effective. The sample size and proposed tools will be discussed and approved by plan before the study.

The Baseline Study consultant will consult with the Plans project consultant (agriculture/development) and MERL staff on the detailed indicators as part of the inception process. While a questionnaire can play a role, this will be less suitable for activities such as land use planning and farmer groups, where other methods can be expected to be used. (NOTE: the project will introduce EMS for DAFO planning and the guidelines for this contain indicators for farmer groups, and project indicators should align with these to some extent).

5.1 Sample

Two fundamental data sets are required

- HH income, along with sources
- Staff (DAFO etc.) in terms of their capacity to deliver development activities.
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HH Incomes and other project outputs according to indicators: the BLT should sample a range of villages:

OLD districts: core target village, expansion villages and no project villages. Within these villages it should sample HHs from three wealth levels (well-off, middle and poor) according to cauterization by village heads

NEW districts: core villages and others. Within these villages it should sample HHs from three wealth levels (well-off, middle and poor) according to cauterization by village heads

ALL villages sampled : village wealth ranking according to Headman

Staff capacity: interview designated staff:

DAFO staff: capacity for improved practices; methods of working with farmers; drafting and management of annual extension plans

LWU, Social, Justice: capacity in terms of relevant knowledge and delivery processes

5.2 Participant selection and recruitment

The consultant will form a Baseline Study Team (BST) of enumerators composed of persons (men and women) who have had a degree of previous experience in delivery of livelihood projects and/or base/endline studies of these (CV's). It is envisaged that the BST have more than one sub-team to expedite the collection of field data, and consider an approach that the whole BST complete study in one district to ensure consistency with sub-team then working in the remaining 4 districts in parallel.

Each sub-team should include MHP District coordinator (as occasional observer) and at two District staff (DAFO and other agency). Orientation and piloting should be done with all team members in first District then split into 2 teams to work in remaining 4 districts. The consultant will be responsible for all compensation for all members of the BST and its sub-teams.

6. ETHICS AND CHILD PROTECTION

Plan International is committed to ensuring that the rights of those participating in data collection or analysis are respected and protected, in accordance with Ethical MERL Framework and our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, which covers the age group of children and young people from age 0 – 24 years old. All applicants should include details in their proposal on how they will ensure ethics and child protection in the data collection process. Specifically, the consultant(s) shall explain how appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders will be ensured and how special attention will be paid to the needs of children and other vulnerable groups. The consultant(s) shall also explain how confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed. All consultants and associates contracted under this assignment are also required adhere to Plan International's policy for safeguarding children and young people.

7. KEY DELIVERABLES

The deliverables for the assignment are as follows:

- Inception report with:
 - an updated timeline, detailing field visits etc.;
 - detailed methodology, including draft sampling methodology and size;
 - draft data collection tools;
 - ethical considerations;
 - consent forms for any primary data collection (Plan will provide);
 - brief justification of the methods and techniques used (including relevant underlying values and assumptions/ theories) with a justification of the selections made (e.g. of persons interviewed); and
 - Ethics and child safeguarding approaches, including any identified risks and associated mitigation strategies.
- Post field work debriefing workshop in Bokeo with Plan Laos, MHP and local provincial and district partners (e.g. DAFO, DOIC, DONRE and LWU).
- A draft report for the study; inclusive of a summary table with baseline indicator values for each indicator of the results framework.
- A Power Point presentation (maximum of 10 slides) summary of the draft final report in Lao and English.
- A Plan/MHP internal validation workshop (1 day) focused on the draft final report.
- A final report in English consisting of: cover sheet; executive summary (maximum of two pages, written in plain English); description of objectives, methods and limitations; summary of data; findings and conclusions plus appendices that include: TOR; data collection tools, results framework indicators, with the base-line indicators and the proposed annual and cumulative targets.
- An executive summary translated into Lao language.
- All materials produced by the study including data sets and other related material in soft form.

Deliverable	Format	Length	Due	Detail
<i>Inception Report</i>	<i>word</i>	<i>5 pages</i>	<i>Day 04</i>	-
<i>Briefing on site (Bokeo)</i>	<i>ppt</i>	<i>10 slides</i>	<i>Day 19</i>	<i>Present on site with district and provincial partners</i>
<i>Draft Baseline Report</i>	<i>word</i>	<i>15 pages</i>	<i>Day 25</i>	<i>15 pages text exclusive of Intro, executive summary, annexes</i>
<i>Briefing (internal) for Plan</i>	<i>ppt</i>	<i>10 slides</i>	<i>Day 25</i>	<i>Present in Plan Vientiane office</i>
<i>Final Baseline Report (including Executive Summary)</i>	<i>word</i>	<i>15 pages</i>	<i>Day 29</i>	<i>includes feedback from Plan and translation to Lao</i>
<i>Final Data Collection Tools</i>	<i>Word/excel</i>	<i>As required</i>	<i>Day 29</i>	<i>Provide with final draft</i>
<i>Cleaned Data (including transcripts)</i>	<i>Word/excel</i>	<i>As required</i>	<i>Day 29</i>	<i>Provide with final draft</i>
<i>Completed Consent Forms</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>
<i>Other Communication Products for Dissemination</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>

8. TIMELINE

The duration of the assignment is approximately as follows:

No	Activities	Outputs	Responsible	Duration
1	Briefing discussion with Plan Lao and PM (following background reading)		Consultant Plan Laos	1 day
2	Production of Draft Inception Report including detailed draft methodology, work plan, staffing, and data collection tools.	Draft Inception report submitted for approval to Plan Laos	Consultant	3 days
3	Consultant to revise and finalise inception report on the basis of comments received by Plan	Final inception report agreed between consultant and project staff.	Consultant	2 day
4	Desk-based and field work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with project staff to prepare for field work as needed Undertake field work (as per approved methodology). This should include discussions with key stakeholders (CSOs and Local Authority partners). 	Qualitative and quantitative data collection and consolidation completed.	Consultant (and team)	20 days [+ travel days]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft key findings and draft report Presentation given of the key findings in-country 	Presentation given on key findings	Consultant	6 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation (of executive summary) 	Presentation in Lao language	Consultant	2 days
6	Finalisation of the report on the basis of feedback from Plan project team	Final report produced	Consultant	2 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation (of executive summary) 	Executive summary in Lao language	Consultant	Pages
Total Consultant Work/Days				36 days

9. EXPECTED QUALIFICATIONS

The team or company must have the following qualifications, skills and experience:

- Graduate degree in development studies, agriculture, gender or a similar or related field.
- Excellent and proven research design and implementation skills in a multicultural and multilingual context.
- Proven data analysis and reporting skills.
- Strong consultative skills with communities, and experience in representation and consultation with government partners.
- Substantial experience in undertaking mixed methods research preferably in the Lao PDR.
- Lao spoken and English written language skills
- Ability to work quickly and efficiently with minimal supervision.

Other requirements:

- All international (non-national) consultants are required to have a work permit and visa permitting work.
- The financial proposal shall include relevant VAT/taxes.
- Plan Laos does not pay consultants any in-field meal allowances or DSA. These costs should be incorporated into the enumerator fees and/or the costs for data collection.
- For travel days only to the field with no data collection or meetings conducted, we request that you budget these days at half the daily consultants' rate.
- Plan Laos will cover in-country accommodation and transport in line with Plan's policies and procedures. These in-country costs should not be included in your application. Any out-of-country costs, such as travel or accommodation, should be included in the application, but shown separately.
- Travel requirements to comply with contract requirements, including reimbursement for any out-of-country and in-country expenses and accommodation as agreed in contract.
- The consultant must meet Plan Laos professional indemnity and public liability insurance requirements and must agree and sign to Plan International code of conduct; children and youth safeguarding policy; gender and inclusion policy; and other relevant documents.
- Approval of the final report by the Country Director or Deputy Country Director Programs Plan Laos.
- Plan is open to negotiate date changes with reasonable advanced notice from the Consultant due to the implications/flow-on affects changes can incur.

10. CONTACT

Please send your application or EOI to Laos.procurement@plan-international.org and Maniphone.phoutphong@plan-international.org. Include the text '**baseline study for the project Enhancing resilience of Ethnic Minorities through Climate Change Adaption Agriculture in Bokeo province, Laos**' in the subject line. And kindly include support documents as outlined. Any questions regarding the details for this ToR can be sent to Ounkeo Pathammavong, Head of Youth Economic Empowerment Program at Ounkeo.Pathammavong@plan-international.org.

11. APPLICATIONS

Applicants are encouraged to email your application or EOI to the contacts listed above **no later 15 August 2024**, with the following information:

1. A brief cover letter demonstrating you meet the competencies above and describing your proposed methodology.
2. Detailed budget, including daily fee rates. Please note that Plan Laos will withhold 5% of the consultant fee as per Withholding Tax requirements from the Government of Lao PDR. Please factor this into your

final day rate. This should **not** include in-country work travel or accommodation as this will be arranged for and paid by Plan at standard rates, however it should include per diems. Consultants not requiring certain costs (such as accommodation in Vientiane) should indicate this in their application. Any international travel requirements should be included in the consultant rate but shown separately.

3. Proposed timeline and confirmation of your ability to work in the dates provided and meet the required deadlines.
4. A copy of your CV, and CV of team members
5. A sample of a recent, similar evaluation report you have written.

Proposals will be assessed on demonstrated experience of the applicants with respect to the selection criteria, and budget proposal.

All applications received after the time of the deadline will not be accepted without exception and only shortlisted applicants will be contacted. Shortlisted applicants may be requested to participate in an in-person or online interview process.