



Biodiverse Landscape Fund Lower Mekong Terms of Reference (ToR) Options to improve farming systems Agronomist and Livestock Specialist

About SNV

SNV is a mission-driven global development partner working in more than 20 countries across Africa and Asia. Building on 60 years of experience and grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we work on the core themes of gender equality and social inclusion, climate adaptation and mitigation, and strong institutions and effective governance. Together with our team of over 1,600 people, our mission is to strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform the agri-food, energy, and water systems, which enable sustainable and more equitable lives for all. For more information on SNV, visit our website: www.snv.org

Biodiverse Landscapes Fund (BLF) – Lower Mekong landscape

The BLF is a UK government programme focussed on protecting biodiversity, reducing poverty and tackling climate change through a landscape approach.

A consortium, led by Fauna & Flora, operates in 3 countries in 3 areas. In Laos, the programme focuses amongst others on Hin Nam No National Park / **Phou Louang - Phou Khao Nok National Protection Forest** in Central Lao PDR, and **Nam Kong Xexou National Production and Protection Forest** in Attapeu province. SNV in Laos will be responsible for two components: 1. Creating alternative sustainable livelihoods for local communities; and 2. Interventions to develop sustainable agriculture models to provide communities with a source of income whilst curbing deforestation.

Various agricultural crops and farming systems can be found in the communities in the target area. Rice based farming systems, vegetables (mostly for home consumption) and livestock (cattle, buffalo, pigs, chickens). Cassava farming is one of the most important livelihoods and at the same time a destructive activity leading to soil degradation and in case of expansion to deforestation. A recent survey showed cassava to be to 70% of a household's cash income. Livestock plays an important cultural role for Indigenous People in their ceremonies and festivities, and as a means of savings and risk management (in case of crop failure).

For the above components we seek 2 consultants, an agronomist/farming system specialist and a livestock specialist, to analyse and recommend implementation options as part of project design. Consultants may apply individually or as a team, but are expected to work closely together. The consultants will coordinate intensively with the BLF team.

Consultancy Objective:

Analyse and describe the various existing farming systems in terms of productivity and sustainability and provide market-based recommendations how to improve its climate resilience, income earning potential, contribution to food security and reduction of deforestation threats and biodiversity loss. Specify recommendations per geographic area and differentiated for different household segments taking gender differences into account.

Tasks for the Crop specialist

1. Describe current farming/cropping systems in selected areas



- In coordination with BLF team we will define clusters of villages to select a few villages to include in the analysis
 - Analyse land use, land holdings (size, soil types from secondary data/participatory soil classification), farming systems, crop components, crop & labour calendar, agricultural production strategies, wealth ranking, and a GESI analysis of the agricultural system.
 - Propose criteria for household segmentation and define hh segments and their strategies/farming practices.
 - Based on climate information identify possible climate risks and coping strategies following the 3A framework.
 - Describe impact of agricultural production systems on biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and forest cover.
 - Present geographical maps of farming systems and its location in protection forests.
2. **Assessing Production performance and Sustainability.**
- Depending on the farming systems analysis we will select a number of priority crops – most probably cassava, rice and a third one. Analyse the various production aspects of the different crops, yield gaps, varieties, climate vulnerability. Analyse production sustainability, negative environmental impacts, soil nutrient depletion, deforestation.
 - Evaluate factors such as planting practices, pest management, and overall efficiency.
 - Analyse production costs, returns to labour, investment needs
 - Analyse farm production effects on food & nutrition security in terms of availability, stability, quality.
 - Determine strategies to enhance production practices in terms of productivity, income increase potential, and environmental sustainable practices.
3. **Crop Market System Analysis:**
- Describe and analyse the markets and value chain for the most important crops, including input suppliers, producers, processors, and consumers.
 - Identify market linkages, pricing mechanisms, product quality, gross margins, and distribution channels.
 - Assess market demand, supply, and pricing dynamics.
 - Assess value chain governance, formal & informal rules and regulations, market power concentration.
 - Identify options for value chain upgrading, improve value chain governance and equity and value chain sustainability.
 - Propose interventions to strengthen market connections, improve price stability, value addition/quality, aggregation, lower transaction costs, improved returns, and competitiveness.

Tasks Livestock Specialist

4. **Describe livestock systems in the selected areas**
- In coordination with BLF team we will define clusters of villages to select a few villages to include in the analysis
 - Analyse land use, land holdings (size, soil types from secondary data/participatory soil classification), farming systems, livestock components, agricultural calendar, agricultural production strategies, wealth ranking, and a GESI analysis of the agricultural system.
 - Analyse what livestock is held, by whom, where and for which purposes. Analyse importance of livestock in social and cultural aspects. Assess the interdependency of livestock in the wider farming system, and its contribution to crop production and sustainability.
 - Analyse the negative/positive effect of local livestock production systems on forest cover, habitat degradation (terrestrial and aquatic), and biodiversity. Analyse zoonotic disease risks for wildlife and for domestic livestock.
 - Propose criteria for household segmentation and define hh segments and their strategies/farming practices.



- Based on climate information identify possible climate risks and coping strategies following the 3A framework.
 - Assessment of livestock contribution to Green House Gas emission and realistic options for decreasing/lowering its footprint.
 - Present geographical maps of livestock/grazing systems and its location in protection forests.
- 5. Asses livestock Management.**
- Based on the livestock farming system analysis we will prioritize a number of livestock to concentrate on. Analyse the various aspects of livestock production and management in the area, including feed production, feeding/grazing practices, disease management, care.
 - Identify bottlenecks, challenges, risks, and opportunities within the production process.
 - Evaluate factors such as feeding practices, health & disease management, and overall efficiency.
 - Analyse production costs, returns to labour, investment needs, cash flow needs for improved management & production practices.
 - Determine strategies to enhance production practices and address gaps that are affordable, applicable, and create market demand to fulfil the gap as service providers and supply chains. (propose technical/social/financial interventions and recommend the methodology to be used to implement in a cost effective, market based and sustainable way).
 - Analyse the gender roles in the production system, in the household decision making, livestock sales and provide recommendations if necessary to improve equity.
- 6. Livestock Market System Analysis:**
- Analyse the livestock value chain, including input suppliers, producers, traders, and markets.
 - Identify market linkages, pricing mechanisms, product quality segments, price build up, gross margins, and distribution channels.
 - Assess market demand, supply, and pricing dynamics. (locally, nationally, internationally).
 - Assess value chain governance, formal & informal rules and regulations, market power concentration, risks of market collusion.
 - Assess animal welfare standards across local livestock supply chains, including at the smallholder rearing, transport and (if applicable) slaughterhouse supply chain tiers.
 - Propose interventions to improve productivity, price capture by farmers, lower transaction costs, improve climate resilience, reduce GHG emissions, increase gender equity, and lower deforestation risks.
- 7. Recommend interventions for Integrated farming sustainability:**
- Assess the options for improvements for integration of livestock-crop farming systems, improve yields and returns and how these would diminish deforestation.
 - Asses these options for technical, social, and financial feasibility and provide clear market-based project intervention recommendations which enable VC actors/households to implement these improved practices.

Deliverables

- Proposed research approach, detailed workplan and research instruments, approved by SNV-BLF project manager
- A table of contents for the report approved by project manager
- A package of data and information, pictures of the VC stages and actors (with consent forms)
- Detailed value chain maps with actors, volumes, margins, price build up
- List of contacts- including of telephone numbers and locations of VC actors.
- Draft consultancy report for feedback
- Presentation PowerPoint of summary findings
- Final report approved by SNV BLF project manager



Duration of Appointment

The consultancy assignment shall be completed within 2 months and be not more than 40 working days for each consultant. Starting date: As soon as possible.

Financial and Technical proposal.

The consultants are expected to present a 2-3 page financial and technical proposal for these TOR.

Requirements:

- University degree in agronomy, agroforestry, Veterinary sciences, Animal husbandry.
- Minimum 8 years of professional experience in cassava development and proven experience in value chain analysis and practical recommendations for production improvements
- Understanding of integrated farming system improvements/ and sustainable natural resource management (that minimise negative biodiversity impacts).
- Ability to work collaboratively in a multicultural environment and with local communities.
- High proficiency in English, and ensure effective communication in Lao

Work location:

Travels and extensive field work in the target areas in Attapeu and Khammouane province.

Key Steps in the Selection Process 3

1. If you believe that your credentials meet the outlined profile, we invite you to apply by uploading your CV (not more than three pages with three referees) and motivation letter (not more than 1 page) by clicking on the "I'm interested" button on, SmartRecruiter <https://smrtr.io/n85d8> before **26 September 2024**.
2. We will require you to provide us with the details of three people willing to act as referees. We will not contact these referees without your explicit permission. Please note that reference checks may be conducted before the selection decision.
3. Should SNV wish to proceed with your application, two interviews with the Selection Committee will occur.
4. After your interviews with the Selection Committee, we will advise you of the Committee's decision as soon as possible.