



Terms of reference to conduct the final evaluation of the project:

« Access to water and sanitation in the Nam Sa watershed: quality and sustainability in Bolikhamxay Province »

1-Introduction: background to the assignment

1.1- Project details

Name of the project:

- Access to water and sanitation in the Nam Sa watershed: quality and sustainability in Bolikhamxay Province

Name of the organization: Comité de Coopération avec le Laos (CCL)

Implementing partners:

- Bolikhamxay Provincial Office for Natural Resources and Environment (PONRE)
- Rural Development Agency (RDA)

Project duration:

- Initially 10 months, from 20th of November 2023 to 30th of September 2024. MoU extension underway from October 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025. Total duration : 14 months.

Memorandum of Understanding: Signed on the 20th of November 2024, Provincial Office for Natural Resources and Environment in Paksan, Bolikhamxay.

Funded by : Agence de l'Eau Rhin-Meuse (AERM), Ville de Paris (VDP)

Target area: 5 villages in the Namsa watershed, Khamphai, Khambon, Botheurn, Nakhaolom and Nabon, with an estimate total population of 3500 inhabitants in Paksan and Pakkading district.

Current Project team: 1 Project coordinator, 1 expatriate project advisor, 1 Health technical assistant from RDA (part-time), 1 health officer from RDA (part-time), and 13 government staff from implementing partners (Department of water resources from Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), PONRE and districts agencies: health, Lao Women Union, Natural Resources, Education & Sport).

1.2- Framework of the Final Evaluation

For over 40 years, CCL (Comité de coopération avec le Laos) has been dedicated to rural development in Laos, with a strong emphasis on improving **health** and **water access** for local communities.

Since 2017, the Nam Sa Basin has been the focus of an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) pilot project¹ by the International Office for Water (IOWater) and the Department of Water

¹ <http://laowis.monre.gov.la/en/pilot-projects/nam-sa.html> ; <https://www.oieau.org/projets/Soutien-GIRE-Laos-phase-6>

Resources (DWR) of MONRE (the Laotian Ministry in charge of natural resources and the environment). The aim of this project is to strengthen concerted governance on water-related issues.

In January 2019, the CCL was contacted by IOWater and the Agence de l'Eau Rhin-Meuse (AERM, the main financial partner of the IWRM project) to exchange information on current actions in the Nam Sa basin and discuss a possible partnership for the implementation of actions to improve access to water in communities, which would be complementary to the governance strengthening actions carried out by IOWater and MONRE.

A joint mission involving CCL, IOWater, MONRE and local authorities was conducted in May 2019 in the Nam Sa basin to identify priority needs in terms of access to water and sanitation.

Following this first CCL mission to the Nam Sa basin, discussions continued with IOWater and MONRE, as well as with a new partner who would be contributing its expertise on sanitation issues: the Laotian civil society association RDA (Rural Development Agency).

A new joint mission to the basin was planned for the second half of 2021 but has so far not been possible due to travel restrictions imposed by the Laotian government as a result of the epidemic situation in the country.

However, discussions led to the formalization of a project by the CCL and RDA, selected by the Water Agencies as part of the 2021 Call for Water and International Solidarity Projects and by the Ville de Paris in the framework of the Call for project Solidae 2022-2023.

This was followed by a 17-month negotiation phase with the local authorities (June 2022 - November 2023) before the MoU was signed on November 20, 2023 in Paksan.

With the aim of contributing to improving the health and hygiene of the inhabitants of the Nam Sa basin, the Namsa project aims to facilitate the work of local authorities and proposes the following components:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Project | Access to water and sanitation in the Nam Sa watershed: quality and sustainability in Bolikhamxay Province. |
| <u>Overall Objective</u> | To contribute to improving access to water and sanitation in the Nam Sa basin |
| <u>Specific Objectives</u> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The communities benefit from an improved access to drinking water in the Nam Sa basin. 2) Contribute to improving hygiene and sanitation conditions in the Nam Sa basin. 3) Strengthening local stakeholders on water resource management. |
| <u>Main activities</u> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to water for communities is improved in quantity and quality. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Rehabilitation and extension of collective water supplies 1.2 Connecting schools to water supply 1.3 Water quality analyses 2. Communities and families support to improve sanitation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Training of trainers on the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and WASH marketing approaches. 2.2 Supporting communities and families towards total sanitation. 3. Strengthening local stakeholders on water resource management. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Strengthening and support of water management committees. 3.2 Carrying out a simplified water balance study at the scale of the entire Nam Sa Basin. |

1.3- Short description of projects context and key issues

The Nam Sa Basin, with a total population of 13,200 people in 18 villages from the Lao, Yor, Hmong, Khmu, Mery, Gnor and Phun ethnic groups, has been the focus of an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) pilot project since 2017 by the International Office for Water (OiEau) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) of MONRE (the Laotian Ministry in charge of natural resources and the environment). The main economic activity in the basin's villages is agricultural production (rice, and to a lesser extent rubber and livestock) for self-consumption and sale, which accounts for 90% of the basin's working population. Access to water for domestic use in the 5 target villages is provided by springs located in the forests of the Pou Ngou mountain, as well as by individual or collective wells (3 to 10 m deep) and boreholes (around 40 m).

Depending on the family, the water drunk by the villagers comes from tapped springs (36% of the population of the 5 villages), from the purchase of water cans (52%), and for some families in Botheurn from individual wells or boreholes (12%). The water supply networks, both gravity-fed and with communal standpipes, are characterized by i/recurrent water leaks due to the age of the installations, ii/periods of shortage, due to leaks and the size of the networks, iii/water quality problems (turbidity, probable recurrent bacterial and parasitic contamination) due to the absence of filtration systems and the inadequacy of sanitation and hygiene measures. While latrine coverage is relatively good across the basin, with 77% of families owning individual latrines and 23% having access to communal latrines, community and family hygiene remains deficient, particularly in terms of facility management and behaviors (hand washing, latrine emptying, water treatment).

Finally, while all 5 villages have water management committees, these are not yet capable of ensuring the long-term sustainability of water supply facilities and lack technical and financial management skills. Community governance of water and sanitation issues is relatively weak in the 5 beneficiary villages.

2 - Cause and objective of the evaluation

The aim of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impacts and foreseen sustainability of the project.

Attention will be given to review and assess the AERM and VDP logical frameworks and their indicators and to match with AERM and VDP specific requirements for final evaluation.

Evaluations reports will be provided to AERM and VDP to both evaluate the project implemented and provide insight related to a potential continuation of CCL's action in the Nam Sa watershed, Bolikhamxay province.

3 – Key questions

Standard OECD/DAC criteria will be assessed following the proposed questions. Other questions can be included by the evaluator(s) in their proposal, while describing the evaluation method.

Other key points will be included within the framework of the evaluation: evaluation of the monitoring & evaluation system, addressing the main cross-cutting issues and providing recommendations.

It is nevertheless primary to consider the context evolution from project design phase and the implementation phase.

Relevance

To what extent is the project's design and its implementation relevant to the priorities determined by the local authorities, the rural communities' needs and priorities?

The project is implemented with different institutional and technical partners, especially PONRE and districts agencies of natural resources (DoNRE), Lao Women Union (DLWU), Health department (DHO), and technical partner RDA providing their respective expertise.

Was the selection of activities implemented in the 5 villages relevant and adapted to their priority needs?

Coherence

To what extent has the project been aligned with the local development public policies, strategies and regulations?

To what extent has the project is coherent with the CCL actions in Laos?

To what extent is the action consistent with the actions of other actors in the Nam Sa basin ?

Was the project coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals?

Did the project contribute to the priorities set within the *Sustainable development goals, in particular Goal 6 "Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all"*, the *9th Five-year National Socio-Economic Plan (2021-2025)*, the *National Green Growth Strategy of the Lao PDR till 2030*, *The Lao PDR National Strategy for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2019-2030*, the *National Nutrition Strategy by 2025 (NNS) and action plan 2016-2025* ?

Effectiveness

Was the project effective to implement and complete the activities as per the plan and to reach the objectives according to the expected outputs, outcomes and indicators?

Was the project implementation consistent with its agreed logical frameworks and its overall and specific objectives?

Did the project decision-making process take into consideration communities' requirements in a participatory way?

To contribute to improving access to water and sanitation in the Nam Sa basin, the project implements activities according to the needs and requirements of communities (Rehabilitation and extension of collective gravity-fed water supply systems, connecting schools to water supply, construction of latrines, Support towards total sanitation, support for water management committees).

Given the achievements, which activities and approaches used could be encouraged and developed in a future similar project?

Impacts

Does the project contribute to improving access to water and sanitation in the Nam Sa basin?

More specifically, do the actions improve water access at the village level in quantity and quality?

Has the sanitation been improved at the communities and family's level?

Does the local stakeholders have been reinforced in water resource management?

Sustainability

Are the project's activities long- lasting, and how sustainable are they?

What are the leverages of - economic and technical - sustainability created by the Project?

What institutional mechanisms need to be built up or strengthened to improve the sustainability of the project?

Cross-cutting issues:

For each criterion, particular attention will be paid to the main cross-cutting issues of the project, especially to what extent the project participates in the strengthening of i/ staff and villagers' capacities, ii/ local governance on water resources.

Recommendations:

Considering the findings on project progress, achievement of results, assessment of the project dispositive and on monitoring system, and considering a potential continuation of CCL's actions in Bolikhamxay, formulate practical recommendations and statements for these different aspects.

4- Evaluation design/ Methodology

The final evaluation will be ideally carried out at the **beginning of January 2025**.

Key questions and OECD criteria as described in section 3 will be followed during the entire evaluation process.

Prior to the start of the evaluation, the contracted evaluator(s) will provide a detailed document (**inception report**) that will include:

- Detailed assignment
- Any limitations and difficulties identified
- Description of the agreed methodology
- Timetable

The tasks and outputs of the final evaluation are:

- To review project documents from both VDP & AERM projects (incl. logical frameworks, intermediary narrative reports, reports from specific studies).
- To review expectations for final evaluation from both VDP & AERM financial partners.
- Review and analyze monitoring & evaluation data for the period from project start to 20th of November 2023.
- Set up a field mission in the target area (at least 3 days of field work), to meet project team, project partners, a sample of project beneficiaries, visit a sample of target villages and activities.
- Review the method that will be followed and data that will be collected by the team during the endline survey and provide recommendations to optimize the endline survey.
- Write the final evaluation comprehensive report (the report will be common to AERM and VDP), i/summarizing the first findings of the evaluation, ii/providing recommendations to improve activity implementation and ownership iii/providing recommendations for the potential continuation of CCL's actions in the Namsa Watershed after the end of the current project.
- Participate in the project closing meeting to present the evaluation to partners and discuss the recommendations (Last week of January).

5-Timeframe of the evaluation

The evaluation field work (mission in Paksan) must be performed between the 6th and 10th of January.

A preparatory briefing between the consultant and CCL project team will take place at CCL office in Vientiane (kick-off and clarification meeting). A courtesy visit to PONRE will be organized in Paksan, during the first day of the field mission, to introduce the consultant to the local stakeholders.

Presentation of findings to CCL, implementing partners and financial partners, is due to be set before the 29th of January in Paksan

The proposition will include **8 working days** as follows:

- ✓ 0,5 working day for briefing in Vientiane
- ✓ 1 working day for literature review
- ✓ At least 4 working days for field work in total, including the first day of transport and meeting with local authorities and project coordinator in Paksan, at least 2 field work in the villages, data analysis and preparation of presentation, debriefings with project team.
- ✓ 0,5 working day for presentation of findings at the CCL office in Vientiane.
- ✓ at least 2 working days for reporting.

The **evaluation team will provide 1 report:**

- ✓ A final joint report for both AERM and VDP projects.
- ✓ A first **draft** of the complete **evaluation reports** will be submitted to CCL on **Monday 20th January 2025** in electronic form.
- ✓ The **final report** will be submitted after the project closing meeting, on **Monday 3rd February 2025**.

See in section 6 the expected structure of the report. In particular, the report will present the logical frameworks of the project, updated to specify the level of achievement of the objectives and indicators and if relevant the percentage of realization. All documents shall be written in English. Remarks on drafts will be sent to the evaluator to complete the final reports before the end of January 2025 (**ideally between 17th – 20th January**).

Reference documents:

The following documents will be provided with the selected evaluator, for preparation of the workplan:

- ✓ Project documents (description of action, logical framework)
- ✓ Narrative reports addressed to VDP
- ✓ Baseline data

6-Expected products / Report documents

The comprehensive final report will include:

Cover sheet

It should include project title, project number, implementing organization, name(s) of evaluator(s), reporting date, project region & country, project implementation period

Table of contents & List of abbreviations

1- Summary

It should be short, not more than three pages. It should focus on the main analytical points, indicate the main conclusions, lessons learned and specific recommendations.

2- Main text

It should start with an introduction describing, first, the project or program to be evaluated and, second, the evaluation objectives. The body or core of the report should follow the evaluation criteria, describing the facts and interpreting or analyzing them in accordance with the key questions pertinent to each criterion.

It should be divided in sections: 2.1-Short description of the subject matter for the evaluation; 2.2-Framework conditions; 2.3-Description of the evaluation and method used; 2.4- Results.

These should be presented as a separate final chapter. Wherever possible, for each key conclusion there should be a corresponding recommendation. The key points of the conclusions will vary in nature but will often cover aspects of the evaluation criteria. Recommendations considering a potential continuation of CCL's action in the province, after the project's ending, should therefore be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible. Recommendations should be carefully targeted to the appropriate audiences at all levels.

4- Conclusions

It will include the main lessons learnt, potential conclusions related to procedures and methods used, the key points to be retained from the project (potential for extension, replication of activities and approaches).

Annexes

- *Terms of Reference of the evaluation*
- *Names of the evaluators and their companies*
- *Methodology applied for the study (phases, methods of data collection, sampling etc)*
- *Logical Frameworks matrices (original and improved/updated) include evaluation of the level of achievement of the indicators*
- *Detailed list of target villages visited*
- *List of persons/organizations consulted*
- *Literature and documentation consulted*
- *Other technical annexes*

7-Key qualifications of the evaluators

The evaluation team will be composed of:

- one team of two experts: one international based in Laos and one national or,**
- one team of one international or national expert and one translator.**

We encourage joint applications from international and national experts.

For English native speaker, we encourage applicants to propose a translator Lao/English.

Experts should have the following skills:

- Background in water management and/or in related fields
- Experience in project evaluation
- Good interpersonal skills including listening skills, giving constructive feedback, and informal training
- Experience of project management (in Laos is a must)
- Good understanding of WASH and IWRM projects
- Good writing skills and proficient in English
- Capacity to read French would be an asset

-- Women are encouraged to apply --

8-Content of the evaluator's offer

Applications should consist of:

- a) CV, including 2 references
- b) A technical proposal: description of methodology and work plan (especially a proposition of planning for the 1st step of the evaluation).
- c) A detailed financial proposal, formulated in USD and including, at least, the following chapters:
 - ✓ Fees, including accommodation and per diem
 - ✓ Transportation (National): the project provides transportation during all field work

The project will directly handle the transportation costs for the evaluator.s (bus to Paksan, car to the field), and the costs for the organization of the workshop to present the findings of the evaluation.

9- Application process

Applicants are requested to submit their proposals **by the 20th of December 2024** to:

- Manivone VORACHAK, CCL Country Director: manivone@ccl-laos.org
- Erwin POLIGNE, Project Advisor: erwin.poligne@ccl-laos.org

For any question on the ToR: please contact Erwin POLIGNE (erwin.poligne@ccl-laos.org)

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted **before the 24th of December**.

The consultant(s) will be contracted by CCL.