

Terms of Reference for Mid-term Evaluation

Phoukoud Integrated Climate Resilient Agriculture and Livelihoods Improvement (PICRAIL II) Project

1. Background and Rationale

ADRA Laos has been registered as an independent International INGO in Lao PDR since July 1992 with a core focus of assisting the most vulnerable groups by alleviating poverty through community driven development projects. ADRA Laos is connected to The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) network which has 115 offices worldwide.

ADRA Laos has implemented more than 120 projects in Lao PDR since its inception in five core sectors including Health; Integrated Agriculture and Natural Resource Management; Economic Development; Education; and Emergency Response. ADRA has gained significant knowledge and technical expertise over nearly 30 years in sub sectors including Agriculture, Livelihoods, Nutrition & Health; Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH); Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Project: The Phoukoud Integrated Climate Resilient Agriculture and Livelihoods Improvement (PICRAIL) project, Phase II, is a 42-month initiative (November 2022-April 2026) in Laos. Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Phase II of the PICRAIL project aims to improve food security and livelihoods in 16 villages for **2,051 households** in Xiengkhouang province. The project focuses on sustainable agriculture, climate-resilient practices, and social inclusion, particularly for women (female headed households) and people with disabilities. Implementing organizations include ADRA Laos, SAEDA (Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association), PDDA (People with Disabilities Development Association), and government district offices such as District Agriculture and Forestry, Labor and Social Welfare, Natural Resources and Environment, and Lao Women's Union.

The project's purpose is to improve food security and livelihoods of vulnerable smallholder farmers in Phoukoud District, Xiengkhouang Province, Lao PDR through nature-based solutions and climate-resilient agriculture.

The objectives are to:

- Improve food security and increase household income by training vulnerable households in climate-resilient agricultural techniques and nature-based solutions for crop and livestock production.
- Increase social inclusion by promoting gender equality, empowering women and people with disabilities to participate more fully in community decision-making processes.
- Enhance capacity building for local implementing partners.

The project builds on previous successes (PICRAIL Phase I), addressing challenges such as climate change, land tenure issues, and limited access to markets and resources. It employs nature-based solutions and community-led initiatives to achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes.

2. Purpose, Objectives and Use

The objectives of this midterm evaluation are to ascertain results by assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts, coherence and foreseen sustainability of the project, and to provide findings, conclusions and possible recommendations for the further project implementation.

The Consultant will review and assess the PICRAIL II project documents such as the logical framework, indicators and baseline, monitoring reports, project activity implementing matrix,

activities input records, qualitative data, project reports on whether the project is meeting projected target outcomes for mid-term and anticipated for end of project.

The mid-term evaluation report will be shared with government, local NPA partners and the donor (BMZ) and for ADRA purposes to inform of any changes that may be required to improve implementation and capture lessons learned.

3. Scope of Work

The Mid-term Evaluation timeframe is estimated to be 22 consultant days from/between 3 March and 11 April 2025.

Target groups and stakeholders, and geographical areas for the evaluation include:

- Target households in the PICRAIL II target district of Xiengkhouang province
- Government counterparts from Phoukoud district.
- Government counterparts from Xiengkhouang Provincial Offices
- Local CSO partners such as SAEDA and PDDA
- ADRA Laos head office in Vientiane Capital.

Examples of questions and criteria for evaluation:

Relevance

- In what extend has the project been consistent with its agreed logical framework and overall objectives?
- Bringing together the expectations of the population and the analysis of the needs and their causes, do the components answer the identified needs?
- As the project is being implemented with different institutional and technical partners ie Provincial and District agencies from Agriculture and Forestry, Labor and Social Welfare, Lao Women Union and technical partners Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association (SAEDA) and People with Disability Development Association (PDDA), - determine participation of these different stakeholders in the implementation and management of PICRAIL II and the level of local ownership.
- During project implementation of PICRAIL II did the project decision-making process take into consideration communities' requirements in a participative way? Can we consider the approach as gender and PWD inclusive?
- Is the selection of activities implemented in the Phoukoud district villages relevant and adaptative to the priority needs for food security and livelihoods in those communities?
- To what extent is the project targeting the most vulnerable?

Coherence

- To what extent does the project align with national, regional, or local policies and strategies related to rural development, food security, and poverty reduction?
- How well does the project complement other ongoing or planned interventions in the same geographical area or sector? Are there any overlaps or gaps in the project's objectives and activities?
- Does the project's approach align with international frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the broader development agenda of the country or region?
- How well does the project integrate cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, disability inclusion, and climate change adaptation with other interventions in the region?
- Are there any potential synergies with other donor-funded programs or initiatives in the sector, and if so, how have these been leveraged or coordinated?
- Is there consistency between the project's strategic objectives and the priorities of the local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders involved?
- Does the project effectively coordinate with other actors, such as local governments, international organizations, and the private sector, in terms of resource mobilization, planning, and execution?

- How does the project's design ensure consistency in terms of long-term development goals and short-term operational activities?

Efficiency

- Assess project performance (activity management, cost control, input delivery) by measuring the adequacy of the deployed resources in relation to the achieved results and effects.
- Are the numerous activities being implemented in an efficient way? Are the objectives being achieved in an economically viable manner? (cost-benefit ratio)

Effectiveness

- Compare (i) the activities planned and their completion and (ii) the initial expected outputs and outcomes and their achievements, also regarding the respective indicators.
- Did implementation bring a consistent synergy between activities and results?
- Quality of activities, objectives, indicators
- Given PICRAIL's achievements to date, to what extent have project activities reduced poverty, increased food security, and impacted on the communities' livelihoods?
- To what extent is PICRAIL's implementing structure (ADRA, SAEDA, PDDA, government partners) providing an improvement of local and shared understanding of the issues between the different participants – should this approach and method be encouraged, improved and/or developed?
- The quality of the implementation of the development activities

Impacts

- Does the project contribute to rural development and improve community livelihoods in target villages? Does the Action improve food security, household income, health, and natural resources management?
- Does the project contribute to the overall objective (see Impact matrix)
- Does it increase capacity among villagers, local authorities, and non-state actors?
- What are the positive and unexpected negative outcomes of the project?

Sustainability

- What are the leverages of economic and technical sustainability created by the project?
- What institutional mechanisms need to be built to strengthen the impact of the project?
- Will the intended positive change (foreseeably) have a lasting effect?
- Are the net benefits of the project likely to resist external risks?
- Risks and opportunities for sustainable effectiveness at organization level and target group level.

Monitoring System

- Is the monitoring system reliable and reactive?
- Does information and data collection produce a representative analysis of the project evolution in terms of activities and impacts?
- How participative is planning and monitoring?
- Have complaints mechanisms been put into place? And have the complaint structures been used by staff, partners and communities?

Cross-cutting issues

- Has cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, social inclusion, environment been addressed in project implementation and to what extent has the project strengthened (i) staff's, partners and communities' capacity (ii) local governance on key issues.
- How was gender taken into account in the selection of personnel? How diverse is the project team?
- Are timing and location of activities inclusive and gender-sensitive?
- Do the project activities reinforce or challenge prevailing gender stereotypes?

4. Process

Below are key phases of the evaluation, activities, and actors involved.

Inception Report	Consultant, to be shared with and reviewed by ADRA Laos and ADRA DE
Literature Review	Consultant, documents provided by ADRA Laos Programs team
Stakeholder & Partner Engagement	Consultant; PICRAIL II field staff as required (Project Manager, Officers), government counterparts, SAEDA, PDDA staffs, beneficiaries.
Debrief	Consultant; ADRA Laos Program Lead, Project Manager, and ADRA Germany Program Coordinator
Mid-Term Evaluation Report – submission of first draft and then finalization based on feedback received	Consultant, Review by ADRA Laos Program Lead and ADRA Germany Program Coordinator (multiple rounds of revisions possible)

5. Outputs and Deliverables

Before starting the evaluation, the Consultant will provide an **inception report** in English that lists:

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

The Consultant will then undertake the following tasks and outputs:

- Review project documents including the logical framework, biannual and annual reports, baseline report, M&E tools etc.
- Review and analyse monitoring and evaluation data for the period from project start to December 2024.
- Coordinate with the Program Lead and PICRAIL II Project Manager to meet with project team, key stakeholders and partners, project beneficiaries and visit a sample of target villages and activities.
- Conduct a debriefing meeting at the end of the evaluation to discuss initial findings with ADRA Laos and ADRA Germany staff.
- Provide a comprehensive Mid-Term Evaluation Report (see Annex A for a sample) that provides findings and recommendations for any feasible improvements that could be considered for project interventions to end of project (April 2026).
- Finalize the Midterm Evaluation Report based on Feedback received from ADRA Laos and Germany. Multiple rounds of feedback may be needed, depending on the quality of the submitted draft reports.

6. Profile of the Evaluation Consultant

The evaluation consultant must be external and independent of ADRA Laos. Experts applying should have:

- Qualifications in agriculture, rural development and/or related field (Master level preferred).
- At least 5 years' experience in project evaluation (M&E) and project management.
- Good interpersonal communication skills including acute listening skills and being able to provide constructive feedback.

- Solid technical understanding of food security, livelihoods, GEDSI, and smallholder agriculture programming is essential, including climate smart agriculture and Nature-based Solution approach.
- Proficient in English and good report writing skills.

When applying the consultant should include:

- Current CVs with 3 reliable references.
- Technical proposal including work plan and methodology.
- Financial proposal in Euros to include fees, and accommodation and per diem rates for field work only.

NB: Logistics and transportation for field work will be covered by the project.

Once the preferred consultant/s are selected, the consultant will be contracted for a period commencing from/between 3 March and 11 April 2025.

7. Tentative Timetable and Quantity Structure

The Consultant will accomplish the tasks in 22 consultant days from/between 3 March and 11 April 2025.

Activity	Deliverables	Dates (tentative)	# of Days
Mid-Term Evaluation advertised, selected, and recruited	Mid-term Evaluation is advertised through all local platforms; Consultant recruited, contracted and initial briefing meeting.	10-28 Feb 25	
Literature review	Conduct desktop research and relevant ADRA Lao documentation	3-5 Mar 25	3 days
Inception Report	The consultant will provide an Inception Report which includes the methodology and workplan to be applied in consultation with ADRA Laos	6-7 Mar 25	2 days
Stakeholder and partner engagement, enquiry, and investigations	ADRA Laos will arrange site visits as requested for meetings with partners. The consultant will undertake site visits and meet with stakeholders (beneficiaries, government partners, project team, CSO partners, and other actors) in Phoukoud district.	10-18 Mar 25	5 days
Data Analysis	The consultant will analyze field findings, prepare and conduct a data verification debrief containing initial findings and recommendations.	19-24 Mar 25	3 days
Debrief	The consultant will deliver a debrief on the visits, initial findings, and recommendations.	25 Mar 25	1 day
1 st report draft and submission	The consultant will write the draft MTR report and submit to the 1 st draft to ADRA Laos.	31 Mar-4 April 25	5 days

Draft MTR Report reviewed by ADRA	ADRA Laos and ADRA Germany will review, make comments, and incorporate and address comments towards the final version	26 Mar-4 April 25	
Revision and 2 nd submission*	The consultant will incorporate comments/questions and submit the 2 nd MTR Report to ADRA Laos for any additional feedback/final check	7-8 April 25	2 days
Final report	Final report submission to ADRA Laos.	11 April 25	1 day

*Note that more revisions may be required depending on the quality of the report.

8. Management of the Evaluation

The stakeholders involved in the management of the evaluation include ADRA Laos' Program Lead, Program Officer, MEAL Officer, project team, ADRA Germany's Program Coordinator and/or any assigned person. Stakeholders involved in the evaluation process will include the Consultant, the PICRAIL II project team, government counterparts, SAEDA, PDDA and a selection of target household beneficiaries.

Stakeholders	Roles and Responsibilities
Program Lead (ADRA Laos)	Coordinate overall implementation of the MTR and review report
Program/MEAL Officer (ADRA Laos)	Facilitate field trip and logistics
PICRAIL Project Manager (ADRA Laos)	Coordinate field stakeholder engagement
Program Coordinator (ADRA Germany)	Review and provide feedback to the report
The Consultant	Lead literature review, stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and report
PICRAIL team, gov't partners, CSO partners, and beneficiaries	Engage and provide data to the Consultant

9. Annexes

Annex A: Report Structure



Report Structure.docx

Annex B: Project Documents

Related project documents will be shared with selected candidates only.