

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Consultant for a training on Contract Farming**

#### **For the GREEN Project**

#### **Generating inclusive Resilience and Environment Enhancement**

## **Background**

The CCL (Comité de Coopération avec le Laos) has been involved in implementing rural development programs in Laos for almost 40 years. Currently, CCL works in different Provinces in Laos mainly in Phongsaly and Oudomxay Provinces. The GREEN project will be implemented in Phongsaly Province where CCL has worked since 1994, implementing different projects on rural development, agroecology, value chain, biodiversity and natural resources management.

The current project “GREEN” (2023-2026) aims at strengthening local communities’ resilience towards climate change impacts. The project follows an integrated and participatory approach and has three interrelated components, each one with a specific objective:

1. Rural communities from Phongsaly province are economically more resilient and integrated within strengthened local value chains;
2. The natural resources of Phongsaly province are preserved and sustainably managed to favour a sustainable, inclusive, and localized economic development;
3. The local stakeholders of Phongsaly province are strengthened, locally acknowledged, and participate in the sustainable and inclusive development of the territory.

## **Context**

The province of Phongsaly is characterised by a mountainous terrain with several steeply sloping massifs and more or less narrow valleys, offering a limited usable agricultural area and limited natural water resources; extensive forest cover<sup>1</sup>; and low population density (11 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>). Due to its location on the border with China to the north and Vietnam to the east, its economy is increasingly specialising in products intended for export, namely sugar cane, the area of which has increased threefold between 2017 and 2019<sup>2</sup>, rubber trees, extensive cattle rearing, tea production, Job's tears and, to a lesser extent, market garden produce (long green beans, squash, etc.). Much of this production is covered by multi-year contracts between producers and Chinese companies. In 2021, a 30-year memorandum of understanding was signed between China and Phongsaly Province with a view to further developing these export crops.

These economic transformations have been accompanied by i) the gradual opening of the region thanks to the development of rural tracks by Chinese companies to export products, ii) the monetisation of the family economy and iii) an exponential economic dynamic with the creation of new opportunities and, more broadly, an economic and social ‘opening up’.

Nevertheless, major challenges are emerging: a decline in food crops and greater dependence on markets for food, including staple foods imported from other provinces or even neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> 77%, *Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2015*

<sup>2</sup> *Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2019*

countries; unfavourable terms of trade for villages due to monopoly markets; degradation of natural resources, particularly water, soil and forest cover, due to the expansion of sugar cane; soil and water pollution due to the massive use of chemical inputs.

On a social level, the extreme workload, particularly for the hand-picked sugar cane harvest, is leading to a deterioration in women's living conditions (very high workloads in addition to domestic chores, men resorting to amphetamines and alcohol to 'cope with the work', with the risk of domestic violence).

The project team and local authorities conducted a baseline survey in June-July 2024 to get some informations concerning the contract farming situation in the 40 targeted villages of BounNeua (20 villages) and Phongsaly (20 villages). The results showed that the main investors are coming only from China. They have contract farming with 17 of the targeted villages in BounNeua district and only 2 villages in the targeted villages of Phongsaly district.

The main types of crops sold are Sugarcane (17 villages of BounNeua district) and Rubber (7 villages in BounNeua district and 2 villages in Phongsaly district). But one village in BounNeua has a contract for maize production: Vung doy - ວຸງດອຍ. 8 villages have 2 contracts in BounNeua district.

Farmers don't have contract farming for tea production. They sell it to cooperative or the Chinese companies come to buy it to group of farmers.

The main implementing partners of the project are:

- ✓ Cooperation for Development and Support to Local Knowledge Association, Phongsaly (COSKA)
- ✓ Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office, Phongsaly (PAFO) and DAFO
- ✓ Lao Women Union and Lao Youth Union

## Scope of the Consultancy

**The consultancy will provide insights and recommendations on contract farming in order to empower the farmers and chief of villages in the negotiation of future contract with companies.**

The baseline survey conducted last year allowed us to identify the main issues faced by the villagers: bad remuneration from the companies. We did not identify yet the name of the concerned company, but we might look at it when we will be working on the contract negotiation training.

After few discussions with the governor of Phongsaly and local authorities from Plan and Investment Office, they told us that the plan of the next 5 years will be to reduce non sustainable crops productions as sugar cane and rubber to replace it by other crops that will have an added environmental and economic value.

The Department of Policy and Legislation (DoPLA), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, has recently reported on the 'Roadmap for Improving Policy and Legal Frameworks for Developing Agricultural Contract Manufacturing in Lao PDR' (MAF and FAO 2019). This brief aims to build on existing work to respond to changing agricultural practices in Laos, and to support the development of a legal framework for CF that can help ensure mutually beneficial outcomes for smallholder farmers and investors in the short term.

GREEN project (with the support of COSKA) want to start by introducing a training of trainers on contract farming to technical staff from relevant sectors.

COSKA (a local NPA) supported gender related activities during previous projects and will have a leading role to keep on introducing the women to contract farming.

Thus, the CCL is looking for **a consultant who will conduct a contract farming training of trainer that will allow the planning of the strategy to apply for the improvement of targeted villages situation.**

## Objectives & outputs of the consultancy

### 2.1- Overall objective of the consultancy:

To enable the technical staff of GREEN Project and relevant technical staff from the government to recognize and understand the basic legal provisions regarding contracts farming and to be able to provide awareness-raising information about basic agricultural production contracts to farmers in the project's target villages in addition to the implementation of a "peasant advisors in contract farming" network.

### 2.2- Specific objectives of the consultancy:

1. Organize and conduct a 5-day workshop to train GREEN project technician and government relevant technician on contract farming.
2. Lead the formalization of a strategy of implementation and spreading of knowledge to villagers.
3. Follow up of awareness raising activities conducted by GREEN project and local authorities to support with guidance.

### 2.3- Expected outputs of the consultancy:

#### *Specific objective 1:*

1. Pedagogic tools have been developed to facilitate a training workshop on contract farming and approaches to build the capacities of the project technicians
2. The basic concepts related to contract farming have been understood by all the members of the workshop (pre and post evaluation)

#### **The training workshop will include the following topics:**

- State policy on contract farming
- Contract farming types
- Contract format
- Type of contracts
- Things to consider when making a contract
- Negotiation strategies
- Measures to ensure contract implementation
- Resolution of administrative or economic issues
- Legal aid
- How to disseminate advertisements or train people at village level
- Planning of the awareness activity
- Demonstration in a village

The potential remaining knowledge gaps are identified among the participants through a questionnaire.

3. The local authority and CCL staff gave ideas to formalise a gender strategy within the different ethnic groups involved in the activities

### *Specific objective 2:*

1. The participants have drafted recommendations for the planning of a final strategy.

This final version of the strategy gives practical actions to be implemented in order to answer the following questions:

- How to disseminate contract farming knowledge?
- How to empower the villagers in the contract farming decision?
- How to create a peasant advisor network that will be in charge of following the negotiation and the correct implementation of a contract farming?
- How to train and follow up this peasant network?
- How local authorities will support villages to ensure the good negotiation and implementation of the contract conditions?

This final strategy report should include:

- List of 20 villages targeted
- List of the detailed actions to disseminate the contract farming knowledge
- List of detailed actions to select and strengthen a peasant advisor network
- List of the output targeted by the activity: 20 villages informed and advised on contract farming; At least 50% of participants in contract farming sessions are women and 30% are young women; 20 relay farmers trained as contract farming advisors
- Pre and post questionnaires to use to evaluate the impact of the awareness raising
- Monitoring planning
- Monitoring tools

### *Specific objective 3:*

1. The consultant provides a slight backstopping to the project team in order to respond to the questions related to the activity implementation

2 to 3 days of meeting with the consultant and the project team are planned to follow up the implementation and the impact of contract farming activity.

## **Method**

### *Specific objective 1:*

**One 5 days' workshop** is organized including 17 local authorities from relevant departments and 6 CCL's staff (50% of women). During this workshop the trained staff will be evaluated on their knowledge and will be able to plan the activity's implementation strategy.

#### **Participants:**

- Local authorities: PAFO(1), PICO(1), P-PI(1), DAFO-Bounneua (2 Technicians), DAFO-Phongsaly (2 Technicians), DONRE-Bounneua (1 Technicians), DONRE-Phongsaly (1 Technicians), D-PI-Bounneua (1 Technician), D-PI-Phongsaly (1 Technician), DOIC-Bounneua (1 Technician), DOIC-Phongsaly (1 Technician), LWU-Bounneua (1 Technician), LWU-Phongsaly (1 Technician), DA-Bounneua (1 technician), DA-Phongsaly (1 technician).
- Project partners: COSKA (2), CCL (4)

The **total expected participants are 23**. The **workshop should be organised in May 2025**. A specific ToR will be written to prepare the training workshop. All the expenses related to this workshop will be covered by GREEN project budget.

### *Specific objective 2:*

The consultant will lead the redaction of implementation strategy based on i/context of the 2 districts, ii/outputs targeted by the project, iii/knowledge earned during the workshop, iv/exchanges with GREEN project technicians and local authorities involved.

**The strategy should be finalized and start to be implemented at the end of May 2025.**

### *Specific objective 3:*

The consultant Plan with the technician involved on this activity 2 to 3 meetings in the year to follow up their questions and the improvement to make on the implementation strategy.

The consultant answers to the project team's questions and request for advice, during the year following the workshop.

## Expected dates and conditions of the consultancy

Start beginning of May 2025 to conduct the workshop in May 2025 and start to implement field activities end of May or beginning of June 2025.

### **Number of days allocated for the consultancy:**

- **Specific objective 1:** May 2025 = 5 days of workshop
- **Specific objective 2:** May-June 2025 = 2 days
- **Specific objective 3:** 2 half days before December 2025;

**A total of 8 days.** Some of the days will be conducted in the field with the project team. The travel, DSA and accommodation costs will be covered by the project budget and should appear in the quotation proposed by the consultant.

This number of working days is indicative and based on the project budget prevision and will be discussed with the selected consultant.

The consultant will receive the assistance of our Technical Assistant in Agriculture, Project coordinator and the project advisor to conduct the activities and to understand better the socio-economic environment of the project to create an adapted their training.

If the consultant needs specific material, it needs to be justified and it will be discussed.

## Selection process

The CCL is looking for one consultant or a team, national (Lao PDR) or international.

The application file should include:

- A Curriculum Vitae
- A technical proposal which includes a description of the method followed to complete each step of the consultancy.
- A financial proposal which details the consultancy fees (related to the number of working days required and every expense expected to be made to reach the objectives of the consultancy). The financial proposal should detail the expected costs for each of the 3 specific objectives of the consultancy.
- Any other documents developed by the applicant and that could be relevant to the topic of the consultancy (ex: previous gender strategy drafted, former works and results obtained on related fields, publications...)

**The following skills will be assets:**

- Background or knowledge in contract farming is mandatory.
- Experience in the facilitation of contract farming activities in the Lao rural context is mandatory.
- Good writing skills and proficient in English (or French)
- Women are encouraged to apply.

**For any question about this call for proposition, please contact, before the May 7<sup>th</sup> 2025:** Mr Robert WILLIAMSON: [robert.williamson@ccl-laos.org](mailto:robert.williamson@ccl-laos.org); or Mr Pasert KHOUNSOMHUENG: [pasert-2011@hotmail.com](mailto:pasert-2011@hotmail.com)

**Candidates should send their application file per email by May 7<sup>th</sup> 2025 to:**

- CCL Director, Mrs. Manivone Vorachak, [manirachak@gmail.com](mailto:manirachak@gmail.com)
- Project advisors: Robert WILLIAMSON, [robert.williamson@ccl-laos.org](mailto:robert.williamson@ccl-laos.org)
- Project coordinator: Paser KHOUNSOMHUENG, [pasert-2011@hotmail.com](mailto:pasert-2011@hotmail.com)

The consultant selected will be offered a consultancy contract signed with CCL.