



Terms of reference

Consultancy on Gender equality to draft the project gender strategy and train the project team on a relevant gender approach

1 - Background to the assignment

A - CCL, the project ADAEBIO2 and COSKA

The CCL (Comité de Coopération avec le Laos) has been involved in implementing rural development programs in Laos for about 40 years. Currently, CCL works in different provinces in Laos, including Phongsaly, Oudomxai and Bolikhamsai.

The project ADAEBio phase 2 “Project on Integrated rural development in Beng, La and Xay districts, Oudomxay province”, funded by Bread for the World and the French Development Agency, is implemented from 1st of January 2025 to 31st of December 2027. It targets 50 villages from ethnic minorities (Khmu 80%, Hmong 10%, Akha 9%, Lao/PouNoy 1%). The project follows an integrated and participatory approach and has 3 specific objectives:

1. The villagers and communities activate levers to reduce the economic and environmental vulnerability of their agroecosystems.
2. The local governance on environment and economic development issues is strengthened.
3. The local knowledge on development and environmental issues are acknowledged, strengthened and shared at the scale of the Oudomxay province and beyond.

The Lao civil society organisation COSKA (Cooperation for development and support to local Knowledge Association) has been established in 2013 and officially registered in 2021. COSKA is dedicated to improving the livelihoods of rural communities without any discrimination. Since 2013, CCL has been accompanying and supporting the creation and the strengthening of COSKA.

B - Context on gender

In the rural areas of Oudomxay province, women are facing intertwined issues and tend to be more vulnerable than men to poverty and its implications. These gender-based inequalities are the results of cultural beliefs, social pressure and reproduction, discrimination and violence against women and girls. In most of the ethnic minority communities in the project area, women tend to have a lower access to education and face greater risks to be illiterate, which reduces their self-confidence, access to information and opportunities, and capacity to weight in the decision-making processes at household and village levels. This brakes women capacity to claim their rights, hinders their own socio-economic development, as well as development of the communities and territory.

C - Integration of gender in ADAEBIO2

Considering that gender inequalities are a brake to sustainable rural development, the project also pursues a transversal gender approach, to mainstream gender issues at all stages of the project. The mix of these different approaches is innovative in Laos and also aims to propose an alternative to the current top-down and patriarchal approach.

Especially, the project will particularly focus on mainstreaming gender related issues in the following activities. When applicable, the gender-related indicator is mentioned.

- **Creation and coaching of village governance structures to enforce collective rules on pesticides, water resource, forest, river and biodiversity conservation.**

The project will work with 40 village committees.

Indicator: Women's decision-making capacity in community decision-making bodies is improved by 20%

- **The villagers implement pilot actions for the conservation of their environment and the management of the forest products**

The project will support volunteer communities in identifying NTFPs for which sustainable management actions are necessary, through a diagnosis of the resource and depletion risks. Project technicians will then facilitate collective discussions to establish management rules by the communities. The project will support certain villages in the construction of NTFP dryers. The project will pay a particular attention to integrate women in the valuation of NTFPs.

Indicator: 1200 villages, including 50% of women, are accompanied on the sustainable management and valorization of NTFP.

- **Inter-community concertation for water-management at the level of the Nam Phak watershed**

The project aims to develop a participatory approach to facilitate community consultation process, with the aim to foster integrated water management in the Nam Phak River basin. Between 10 to 15 villages will be involved in the elaboration of an action plan, mainly made of nature-based solutions, to reduce the vulnerability to floods & droughts.

Indicator: the place of women in dialogue spaces is reinforced by 30%, in terms of participation and perception of their role in discussions.

- **Support to the provincial think tanks on pesticides and biodiversity**

The think tanks are horizontal discursion arenas that open a space for free speech on technical topics related to pesticides and biodiversity. They operate as provincial advocacy groups, providing technical advice and knowledge to the local decision-makers. They are composed of village representatives, technical staff from district and province levels, officials from district and province level, civil society staff, and economic stakeholders. In total, 10 workshops are planned, with an involvement of 120 people.

Indicator: the place of women in dialogue spaces is reinforced by 30%, in terms of participation and perception of their role in discussions.

- **Training of trainers of village-leaders, governments and civil society staff on relevant issues**

Among the various training sessions, two of them will focus on gender: one to the project staff and local authorities, as well as one specifically for women village leaders.

In the frame of ADAEBio 2, COSKA is involved in gender related activities, mainly at three levels: i) the integration of gender into all project actions; ii) involvement in work to strengthen village governance, especially through the village committees; iii) capacity building of the project team, authorities and village leaders on gender related issues. A part-time gender officer is mobilized by COSKA for the purpose of the project.

2 – Objectives and outputs of the consultancy

A – Specific objectives of the consultancy

1. Prepare and facilitate a training workshop on gender issues and approaches to build the capacities of the project staff (development of an agenda, creation of pedagogical tools etc...).

The objective of the training workshop is to increase the knowledge of the project staff about gender-related issues, in accordance with 1) the activities and objectives of the project; 2) the pre-identified level of knowledge and skills of the project staff. The workshop will include the following topics:

- The socio-cultural environment of each ethnic group (Khmu, Hmong, Akha) and its implications in terms of gender inequalities and gender-based roles.
- The role of women in governance (village and province levels)
- The role of women in agricultural and environmental economic activities, especially in the valuation of NTFPs.
- Approaches to integrate gender in the project activities.

2. Lead the development of the project gender strategy, in close collaboration with the COSKA gender officer and CCL staff.

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

- *How to increase the women decision-making capacity in community decision-making bodies?*

According to the way the project proposes to calculate the related indicator, we consider that the decision-making capacity of women is made of the following components: 1) presence in the village committees; 2) access to leadership positions; 3) access in advance to information linked to committee meetings (dates, agenda, issues to be discussed); 4) active participation (asking questions, giving their opinion, making proposals); 5) influence on decisions; 6) self-confidence (to speak, share their opinion, contribute to decisions); 7) respect from other committee members (especially when speaking); 8) ability to represent other women from the community who are not members of the committees.

- *How to increase the place of women in dialogue spaces (inter-community at the watershed level + 2 think tanks at the provincial level), in terms of participation and perception of their role in discussions?*

According to the way the project proposes to calculate the related indicator, we consider that the perception of the role of women in discussions is made of the following components: 1) confidence in speaking in front of the group; 2) influence in decisions; 3) the value given to women's voices in public discussions; 4) the wish from both women and men to see an increased involvement of women in such dialogue spaces.

- *How to foster the implication of women in the management and valorisation of NTFP? How to increase the positive economic impact of such an activity for women?*

Moreover, the final version includes suggestions about the methodology to define and calculate the project gender-related indicators. Note that a methodology has already been developed but may need improvement. It will be shared beforehand.

3. Train and coach the COSKA gender officer in the development of gender-related training modules and the implementation of the gender strategy.

The content and pedagogic tools must be adapted to the target beneficiaries and objective of each training session. Here is an early description of what is expected for each session:

- *Training session to the project staff and local authorities*

This training session is similar to the one of the part 1 of the workshop (cf. output OS 1) but will target a larger audience. This session aims at 1) increasing the knowledge of the project staff about gender-related issues, with a focus on the role of women in governance (community and province levels) and economic activities; 2) presenting the gender strategy of the project.

- *Training session to village women leaders*

This session aims at promoting their role within villages, particularly in community decision-making processes and in economic activities (cf. transformation of NTFP).

Note that the consultant is not expected to take part in these two training sessions, even if it could be if assessed as necessary. The mission of the consultant is to train and coach the COSKA gender officer to be able to do it on his/her own.

B – Specific outputs of the consultancy

Specific output 1

1. The basic concepts related to gender issues are understood by all the project staff, using developed customized pedagogical tools and approaches.
2. Recommendations and draft orientations are formulated by the participants for the redaction of a gender strategy.

Specific output 2

1. A project gender strategy is developed

Specific Output 3

1. The COSKA gender officer is able to give gender-related training modules.
2. The COSKA gender officer is able to coach the whole project team on the practical implementation of the project gender strategy and its implications in the project activities.

3 – Deliverables and timeline

| <u>N°</u> | Deliverable | Timeline |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| <u>1</u> | Facilitation of a training workshop on gender equality | Mid-August |
| <u>2</u> | Submission of a workshop's report incl. the recommendations of the project staff on the gender strategy | End-August |
| <u>3</u> | Submission of the gender strategy | Mid-September |
| <u>4</u> | Report on training/coaching sessions | Mid-October |

4 - Methodology

Specific objective 1

The methodology is detailed in the table below:

| Activity | Expected number of days |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Preparation step with the project team: 1) understand the gender-related activities and indicators 2) analyse with the staff their level of knowledge and skills on gender-related issues. | 1 |
| Preparation step in the field: visit of village committees (ex: village head committee, forest committee, pesticides committee) to understand the context and identify the needs. | 1 |
| Desked-based preparation step to develop the content of the workshop and associated pedagogic tools. | 1 |
| Workshop part 1: Gender-related issues and approaches Participants (16): <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CCL (7): technicians on water (1), environment (1), biodiversity (1), agriculture (1), pesticides (1), project coordinator (1), project advisor (1).- COSKA (1).- Local authorities (8): PAFO (2), DAFO (3), LWU (3). | 2 |
| Workshop part 2: Brainstorming on ideas to formalise a gender strategy for the project Participants: cf. part 1 | 1 |

Specific objective 2

The consultant writes the final document, based on i/the information gathered from the project staff and the communities, during the preparation steps prior to the workshop; ii/the ideas and recommendations gathered during the second part of the workshop; iii/ knowledge and literature review on gender approaches.

Two days of desk-based work are expected.

Specific objective 3

The training and coaching of the COSKA gender officer can be divided into 3 activities:

| Activity | Expected number of days |
|---|-------------------------|
| Training on the training session to the project staff and local authorities | 1 |
| Training on the training session to village women leaders | 1 |
| Coaching on the practical implementation of the project gender strategy and its implications in the project activities : a field activity in villages may be organized for directly coaching on the inclusion of the gender approach on the support to village committees. | 1 |
| Reporting | 1 |

5 - Conditions

The consultancy is expected to be held over the following period:

- Specific objective 1: Mid-August = 6 days
- Specific objective 2: Mid-September (deadline): 2 days
- Specific objective 3: Early October: 4 days

A total of 12 days is expected. This number of working days is indicative and based on the project budget prevision and will be discussed with the selected consultant.

The consultancy associated to the specific objectives 1 and 3 is supposed to be held in Oudomxai province, while the completion of the specific objective 2 can be done from remote. Two roundtrips Vientiane - Oudomxai will be covered by the project. DSA and accommodation costs will be covered by the project budget and should appear in the daily rate proposed by the consultant.

The consultant will work closely with the project staff and the COSKA gender officer.

6 - Selection process

The CCL is looking for one national (Lao PDR) consultant.

The application file should include:

- A Curriculum Vitae
- A technical proposal which includes the 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 gender issues is mandatory.
- Experience in the facilitation of gender approaches and/or gender related activities in the Lao rural context is mandatory.
- Good writing skills and proficient in English
- Women are encouraged to apply.

For any question about this call for proposal, please contact, before July 11, 2025: Mr Dorian DEJACE, dorian.dejace@ccl-laos.org.

Candidates should send their application file per email by July 11, 2025 to:

- CCL Director, Ms. Manivone Vorachak, manivone@ccl-laos.org
- CCL program officer: Ms. Violaine Fourile, violaine.fourile@ccl-laos.org
- CCL Project advisor for ADAEBIO2: Mr Dorian DEJACE, dorian.dejace@ccl-laos.org

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