

Terms of Reference (ToR)
Project Final Evaluation
Strengthening Rights to Land, continuation
Pek District - Xiengkhouang
Project Number: N-LAO-2022-0293

1. Introduction

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was formed when representatives of various Mennonite church conferences in the United States met on July 27-28, 1920, in Indiana, U.S., and pledged to aid hungry people, including Mennonites, in Russia and Ukraine. It is a Christian faith-based international NGO that has existed for more than 100 years and currently works in all sectors of development, disaster response, and peacebuilding in 51 countries around the world. In partnership with local churches and organizations, MCC has established long-term positive relationships with hundreds of local partner organizations.

MCC has worked in Lao PDR since 1975. For the first 15 years, it was one of only a few international non-government organizations (INGOs) in the country. Its work has ranged from post-war recovery, education, public health, agriculture and irrigation, nutrition, business development, justice, and human rights. Most recently this has also included supporting land rights by providing training on land law to small land holders and village leaders.

Rural populations in Laos, particularly ethnic minority villagers, are vulnerable to land loss and negative livelihood impacts from investment projects, forced concessions, and leases. As of 2019, approximately 20% of the total land concession area in Lao PDR was located in the central province of Xiengkhouang, with a vast majority in Pek district, where villagers' livelihoods are intrinsically linked to their land. Agricultural land loss affects food security and livelihoods and hence the overall household economy. Food insecurity results in poorer health, education and work outcomes. The lack of understanding of the law and rights, especially land-related rights, has hindered local ethnic communities from protecting their land and livelihood.

Unstable livelihood and food security of local ethnic minorities is also worsening in recent years in Pek district due to climate change impacts such as increasing temperatures, decreasing rainfall, longer and more severe droughts. Better access to irrigation for agricultural production has become critical, but poor, local ethnic farmers are facing difficulties adapting due to limitations in environment-friendly and climate adaptation knowledge, techniques and resources.

To address these critical issues, MCC's project – Strengthening Rights to Land, continuation ("the project") – focuses interventions on two key components: dissemination and understanding of laws related to land, and an enhanced irrigation and climate adaptation. Through activities under these two components, the project drives improvement in the overall project goal and two objectives:

Goal: Justice and welfare of local communities in Lao PDR is improved.

Objective 1: Legitimate rights and interests of local communities in relation to land are respected.

Objective 2: Food security of local communities is improved through climate resilience and adaptability.

This project is funded through the generosity and support of Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) and Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC), the donors. Total funding amounts to 935,000 Euro over a three-year period from March 2023 to February 2026. In

addition to MCC and the donors, other relevant stakeholders for this project include its government partners, especially its main partner, the District Office of Agriculture and Forestry.

With the project nearing completion, a final evaluation is commissioned to assess its performance and outcomes, identify lessons learned, and provide recommendations for future programming.

2. Cause and objective of the evaluation

As part of the cooperation agreement between MCC and Bread for the World, a project evaluation is required during the last year of the project. The evaluation will focus on the assessment of the implemented activities (in accordance with the agreement between the donors and MCC) and whether the activities led to the achievement of the planned results as well as to the project objectives. This will be the first and final external evaluation of this project.

As a result of this evaluation, actionable recommendations from the evaluator/s are expected to identify good practices, challenges, and lessons learned. This evaluation will be used to increase reflective learning, improve the quality of future programming, and guide MCC's strategic planning. It will also be used by the main government partner to aid them in making evidence-based decisions in their future policy and planning development. The project is in its third and final year of implementation, with about nine months remaining.

3. Key questions

It is expected that the evaluation report will entail a comprehensive analysis of the project from its inception in March 2023 to present, considering its performance and effects as well as its beneficiaries, partners, stakeholders, and the relationships between them.

Cross-cutting issues such as gender and ethnic equality, and inclusion of persons with a disability, shall be considered in all the questions [where applicable].

The key questions of this evaluation - based on the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria - are:

Relevance

- To what extent was the project suited to the particular needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries?
- To what extent were the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- To what extent have stakeholders been actively and meaningfully involved in project design, implementation, re-design and monitoring?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? Reflection on various factors: internal and external, operational and programmatic, components of the project etc.
- Were there any non-intended effects? If so, what are they? What are the reasons?

Efficiency

- Was the MCC set-up on the ground appropriate to support the project and the partners?

- To what extent were the project's resources efficiently used for project activities (e.g., Were activities cost-efficient? Were objectives achieved on time? Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?)

Impact

- What real difference/changes has the project made to the lives of the target groups?
- How do the partners and beneficiaries see the impact themselves and how do they describe the changes?
- To what extent has the project contributed through its interventions to the wider community (i.e. indirect beneficiaries)?

Sustainability

- To what extent can the benefits of the project continue after it is finished?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the sustainability of the project?
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Additionally, the effectiveness of the project's Monitoring and Evaluation processes, procedures, measures, and system should be assessed during the evaluation.

4. Evaluation design/methods

The evaluation should be undertaken using the OECD-DAC standards and should be impartial, credible, precise, and ultimately result in a report which can be presented to Bread for the World in compliance with donor regulations. While there are no limitations on the format of the report, it will need to meet the needs of all key stakeholders for the report and should be discussed with MCC.

The evaluation methodology should be participatory, inclusive, sensitive to cultural differences, and ethical in data collection practices. Evaluators are encouraged to use participatory and qualitative methods for data collection and data analysis, along with quantitative methods for measuring the changes, in line with the overall goals, objectives, and indicators of the project. The evaluator will be provided with secondary sources (biannual donor reporting, financial audits reports, baseline and midline data, etc), as well as project documentation (project proposal, cooperation agreement, etc.). At the same time, the evaluator shall consider other external secondary data sources when / if necessary. The primary sources of data will include MCC staff and partners, as well as direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project.

5. Process of the evaluation/time frame

Evaluation will be managed by Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Coordinator within the Vientiane, Laos office. However, it will be implemented in close cooperation with the project team in Xiengkhouang. The evaluation team is also expected to liaise with the project's Government partners.

Expected products

- 1) Inception report, including:
 - a. A detailed methodology;
 - b. Tools: Objectives and key questions, Methodology, Data collection methods and detailed tools actor by actor, sampling considerations if any, timeline, etc; and
 - c. Data collection plan, including the logistical arrangements.

- 2) Evaluation Final Report, not more than 25 pages (excluding annexes), written in simple English. It will consist of:
- Executive Summary
 - Methodology, including limitations.
 - Main Findings, disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity. Reflecting on key areas of the evaluation as mentioned above.
 - Conclusions and Recommendations.
- Any additional information should be provided in Annexes.
- 3) Prepared presentation for IMC

What	By when
Documentation review, desk research & initial consultations	-
Inception report, including detailed methodology and tools	July 11, 2025
Data collection	-
Data management & analysis	-
First draft report of evaluation	August 11, 2025
Review/feedback from MCC of first draft report	August 13, 2025
Final evaluation report and presentation	August 15, 2025
Workshop with IMC on findings of the report (in Xiengkhouang)	TBA

6. Key qualifications of the evaluators

Required Qualifications:

- Currently reside in Laos OR can independently and easily gain access and authority to work in Laos.
- Master or higher degree in Law and/or evaluation.
- Background and experience in legal sector and/or agriculture.
- Prior work experience conducting evaluations of projects, including working with the OECD-DAC criteria.
- Training or significant experience with research methodologies. Strong competence in qualitative data collection, synthesis, analysis, and presentation. Quantitative data collection tool design, summary, interpretation, and presentation of numerical data.
- Understanding of Lao policies and strategies related to land rights, access to justice, and/or grassroots justice.
- Excellent English communication and writing skills.

Desired Qualifications:

- Previous experience working alongside Lao Government partners in implementing development activities and/or evaluation activities.
- Prior work experience in legal education, conflict mediation, or justice system development.
- Background in land rights advocacy, law, legal education, community development, human rights, and/or conflict mediation/resolution.
- Ability to speak pasa Lao.

7. Content of the evaluator's offer

Interested evaluators should submit an offer that includes:

- Cover letter outlining the approach, roles, and responsibilities of all individuals;
- CVs of all evaluators;
- Evaluation Proposal, which includes the methods that will be used, a proposed timeline, and sample reports;
- Financial Proposal, which outlines the suggested costs, including all ancillary costs that may be incurred during the evaluation; and
- Electronic copy of two previous evaluation reports you have written (independently or as a team).

Applications should be submitted via email to philipcranley@mcc.org by June 22, 2025.

Any questions can be addressed to:

Philip Cranley (PMER Coordinator) philipcranley@mcc.org

MCC Office: (856-21) 312 625