



Comité de Coopération avec le Laos

Terms of reference for a consultancy on:

Puerh Tea Processing Expert

Project: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTHERN UPLAND TERRITORY

1. Background to the assignment

1.1. Project details

Name of the project:

- Sustainable management in the northern upland territory, Yot Ou district, Phongsaly.

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

Implementing partners:

- ✓ Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office Phongsaly (PAFO)
- ✓ Nyot Ou Tea Cooperative

Duration of the project: 3 years from March 2023 to Feb. 2026.

Funded by: AFD (Agence Française de Développement) & BfW (Brot für die Welt),

1.2. Framework of the consultancy

The CCL (Comité de Coopération avec le Laos) has been involved in implementing rural development programs in Laos for almost 40 years with a particular focus on upland areas in Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, Xiengkhouang and Phongsaly. Since 2020, CCL and its partners are implementing a new rural development project – *Sustainable Management in the Northern Uplands Territory: Tea, Terroir, Territory*, (3T project) with the support of the French Development Agency (AFD) and Bread for the World (BfW). The project aims to strengthen the sustainable livelihoods of upland families and to build the capacities of the Nyot Ou Tea Cooperative, ensuring its efficiency, international recognition for premium-quality products, effective governance, respect for inclusion, and acknowledged socio-environmental commitments.

So far, the strengthening of the cooperative has reached key milestones in terms of structure, management, and official recognition. Committee members and staff have clearly understood their roles and responsibilities. Quality control, traceability, packaging, and export processes are now well managed.

The project places a strong emphasis on strengthening commercial partnerships, which are essential for ensuring long-term sustainability. Today, the cooperative is well recognized in Europe thanks to awareness-raising efforts and participation in prestigious festivals. The cooperative is currently working with different commercial partners such as *Palais des Thés* and *Paper & Tea*, who, while also

positioned on the premium segment, have extensive distribution networks, resulting in larger order volumes. China is another strategic market. The cooperative team has already conducted two prospecting missions there. However, competition is more intense, and the economic slowdown over the past two years has reduced overall consumption — including tea. While profit margins in China are lower, the potential order volumes are significantly higher, especially for Pu-erh tea and black tea, which would help increase workload and income for all cooperative members.

The need to strengthen the technical skills of the cooperative's staff and members is a key component of the project. While the technicians responsible for tea processing are now proficient in producing Pu-erh, white, and black teas, mastering the newly acquired equipment (industrial woks, ovens, etc.) to increase production capacity remains a challenge. During the spring 2025 season, the team struggled to fully operate the equipment, resulting in production failures and quality issues.

In the region—and in Laos more broadly—technical knowledge of this type of processing equipment is still very limited. Most expertise comes from China, where the tea sector is far more developed and structured. To ensure the cooperative's continued growth, it is therefore essential to provide technical assistance, enabling staff and members to strengthen their skills and build capacity in equipment operation and quality control.

2 – Objectives and expected activities of the consultancy

2.1. Objective of the consultancy:

- **Improve the capacity and skills of the Nyot Ou Tea Cooperative staff and members on tea processing skills and on mastering the newly acquired equipment**

2.2. Expected results:

- Nyot Ou Tea cooperative staff & members have better theoretical understanding of Pu-erh Tea quality criteria and processing styles;
- Nyot Ou Tea cooperative staff & members have improved practical processing skills;
- Nyot Ou Tea cooperative staff & members master the cooperative processing equipment.

2.3. Expected consultancy work: activities and methods

Timing: The mission is expected to take place at the end of September 2025, when tea producers begin harvesting leaves for the autumn season. However, the dates should remain flexible to align with the harvest calendar. The mission is expected for 5 days (2 travel days + 3 days in the field). However, methodology and calendar should be proposed by the consultant to fulfil the expected results of the mission.

Methodology: the methodology should be proposed by the Consultant in his Technical Offer. This one can be adapted later based on the field constraints and/or changes happening during the consultancy.

3-Selection process

To reach the objectives mentioned above, CCL is looking for one consultant national or international consultant, or one Lao Non-Profit Association, or one team of consultants.

Application file should include:

- Curriculum Vitae (or in the case the application is an organisation: a presentation of the organisation and CVs of the members proposed to set up the consultancy);
- A motivation letter;
- A financial proposal which details the consultancy fees (travel days and working days) and every expense expected to be made to reach the objectives of the consultancy;
- A technical offer explaining briefly the methodology that will be used;
- A tentative workplan and timeframe;

The following skills will be assets:

- Background or knowledge in agronomy or other relevant background;
- Strong skills and knowledge on Tea processing especially Puer tea processing;
- Strong and long-term experience in the tea value chain;
- Ability to lead training and coaching,
- Knowledge and/or personal interest in rural development issues;
- Fluency in Lao or Chinese;
- Fluency in English or French will be a strong asset;
- Women are encouraged to apply.

For any question about this call for proposition, please contact: Mr Anthony Gueguen: a.gueguen.ccl@gmail.com

Candidates should send their application file per email by September 10th, 2025, to CCL Project advisor Mr Anthony GUEGUEN, a.gueguen.ccl@gmail.com

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