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Until we are all equal



Terms of Reference

Review and Strengthen the Lasting Laos Certification Programme

December 2025

Plan International Laos (PIL) is currently seeking a service provider to review and strengthen the Lasting Laos Certification Programme to align with relevant national and international standards, policies and schemes and integrate stronger criteria and processes related to single-use plastics (SUPs) to support the **Plastic Smart Laos Project**.

1. About Plan International Laos

Working in over 50 developing countries globally, Plan International strives for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International has been working in Laos since 2007, and is delivering programs in 10 provinces in Laos, including Bokeo, Oudomxay, Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Salavan Provinces. We support children and youth to access their rights through our Public Health, Education, Livelihoods, Adolescent and Youth Economic Empowerment programmes. In all contexts, together with partners, we strive for lasting impact in norms, attitudes and behaviors, social and economic safety nets, and policy frameworks. Our work includes community-based action, partner strengthening, and policy advocacy, all focused on gender transformative programming. Visit www.plan-international.org and www.lastinglaos.com for more information.

2. Project Background

The Plastic-Smart Laos project, funded by the Global Environment Fund with co-funding from France and the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM), and implemented in cooperation between the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Swisscontact and Plan International Laos (PIL), will support Laos in its efforts to become a plastic-smart country with the objective of reducing the production and use of SUP, in particular those used for the consumption of food and beverage. By aiming to reduce food and plastic SUPs in Laos, the programme will indirectly help to tackle a key source of plastic pollution in the country (45% is SUP waste), and therefore reduce the leakage of plastic waste into the environment.

The programme will adopt a systemic and integrated approach, taking account of all the links in the value chain. In particular, it will involve deploying upstream interventions to reduce the production and use of problematic and unnecessary food and beverage SUP. The private sector will be empowered to be part of the solution both as drivers of change and innovators of concrete solutions. Across the programme's 5 components, LNCCI will work with Plan to ensure the quality implementation of the following:

- **Support Component 1:** facilitating the adoption of a regulatory framework enabling the reduction of problematic food and beverage SUPs, and incentivize the production and use of eco-friendly substitutes.
- **Lead on Component 3:** supporting the transition of the tourism/hospitality sectors towards less SUP and better waste management practices through the Lasting Laos certification programme.

Central to PIL and LNCCI's role in the project is the ***Lasting Laos Certification Programme*** which is a local sustainability programme for MSMEs in the Lao tourism industry that have demonstrated sustainable environmental, social and economic practices. The programme has been developed previously as part of the SUSTOUR Laos project (implemented by PIL and funded by the European Union) and administered locally by the LNCCI. The goal of the programme is to improve the overall sustainability of the tourism value chain by providing benchmarks and guidance for local MSMEs to measure and improve their sustainability. The certification is based on a set of sustainability criteria developed for four key sectors of the tourism industry (transportation, handicrafts, food & beverage, cultural excursions) with waste management as a priority cross-cutting issue across all sectors. These criteria have been developed in consultation with relevant private and public sector stakeholders and is based on the internationally recognized Travelife certification. MSMEs must demonstrate compliance with the criteria in order to become a Lasting Laos certified business. MSMEs report their compliance of the checklist through an online platform and compliance is verified by LNCCI with technical support provided by PIL. MSMEs who have proven compliance with the certification criteria are awarded and recognized as leading sustainable MSMEs in the Lao tourism industry.

3. Objective

The overall objective of this consultancy is to support PIL and LNCCI in strengthening the existing Lasting Laos certification programme in relation to the use of SUPs, substitute products and waste management, as well as seeking better alignment with relevant certifications schemes and regulations at the local (e.g., Government of Laos regulations, Plastic Free Laos Label), regional (ASEAN standards) and international levels (e.g. GSTC, ISO, UNEP, regulations in the EU New Green Deal, etc.). One of the key goals of the Lasting Laos certification programme is to provide local MSMEs with a “stepping stone” to meet international sustainability standards and practices. Moreover, the assignment will have a particular focus on aligning the Lasting Laos and Plastic Free Laos schemes.

The consultant will lead the review process, conduct relevant research and stakeholder consultations, identify areas that need strengthening and provide practical recommendations to improve the certification in relation to SUP use and waste management. The consultant will also work closely with technical experts from Plan will help to review and strengthen the certification on aspects related to gender equality, inclusion and child safeguarding which are central to Plans organizational goals and priorities. This consultancy is a key activity to ensure the certification programme is fully able to support the Plastic Smart Laos project in meeting its objectives, as well as ensuring the certifications continued relevance, credibility, and alignment with national and international sustainability standards. Specifically, the consultant will:

- Lead the review of the certification framework, process, criteria, training materials, etc.
- Conduct research and consultations with key stakeholders to identify areas requiring improvement.
- Provide practical, actionable recommendations to strengthen the certification's relevance, credibility, and alignment with local and international sustainability standards. This will include recommendations related to the expansion of the certification programme to 3 additional sectors: hospitality (e.g. hotels, guesthouses), travel services (travel agents, tour operators) and agri-food processing sectors.

- Work with Plan International technical experts to integrate gender equality, inclusion, and child safeguarding into the certification framework.

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will work under the supervision of PIL and LNCCI, in close coordination with the Plastic Smart Laos project team and other relevant stakeholders. The tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Review of the Certification Framework

- Analyze existing criteria, scoring, and verification mechanisms of the Lasting Laos Certification.
- Review relevant project documents (e.g. project proposals) to gain background knowledge, especially for activities related to the expansion of the certification programme to 3 additional sectors.
- Identify gaps, overlaps, and areas for improvement, particularly regarding SUP reduction, waste management, substitute materials, circular economy practices. Assess how the certification can be better aligned with national regulations, ASEAN standards, and international certifications (e.g., GSTC, ISO, UNEP).
- Consult with technical staff from Plan to better incorporate gender equality, inclusion and child safeguarding into the certification.

2. Initial Recommendations

- Based on research and consultation, develop initial recommendations which are actionable and practical. Recommendations should focus on (but are not limited to) the following:
 - i. Strengthening criteria, processes, training materials, etc. focusing on SUP waste management, SUP alternatives, and circular economy practices, as well as gender, inclusion, and child safeguarding;
 - ii. Harmonizing the Lasting Laos certification with local, regional and international sustainability standards with a particular focus on the Plastic Free Laos labels, ensuring coherence in criteria, process, and outreach.
 - iii. Enhancements for monitoring, verification, and reporting mechanisms.

3. Stakeholder Consultations

- In coordination with PIL, plan and facilitate two consultation workshops (in-person in Vientiane Capital or remotely) with relevant representatives from the private sector, government, academia, and development partners.
- The first workshop should be used for initial consultation and information gathering. The second workshop should be used to present the draft findings and gather inputs to refine recommendations and revised certification materials.
- Additional 1-on-1 consultations with key stakeholders (e.g. from PIL, LNCCI, MoIC, etc.) may be necessary.

[Workshop costs (e.g. venue, food & beverage, etc.) to be covered by PIL; consultant is responsible for preparation support and facilitation]

4. Revision of Certification Materials

- Revise and update applicable certification criteria, processes, guidance documents, training materials, and any other relevant materials.
- Thoroughly review and revise the certification for all existing sectors under the certification (food & beverage, handicraft, transportation and cultural excursions). Actional recommendations related to the expanded sectors (hospitality, travel services (travel agents, and agri-food processing sectors) should also be provided.
- Ensure the revised content integrates project priorities including SUP, waste management, circular economy, gender, inclusion, and child safeguarding elements.

5. Capacity Building for PIL and LNCCI staff

- Deliver one training session for PIL, LNCCI and other relevant stakeholders on the revised certification standards, processes, and materials to ensure effective implementation.

[Training costs (e.g. venue, food & beverage, etc.) to be covered by PIL; consultant is responsible for preparation support and facilitation]

5. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected from the service provider:

#	Deliverable	Description
1	Initial Recommendations	Desk review and analysis of existing certification materials, benchmarking against relevant national, regional, and international standards, and provision of initial recommendations for improvement.
2	Facilitate Consultation Workshops (2)*	Design and facilitation of two stakeholder consultation workshops (in-person or remotely); submission of workshop reports summarising key feedback and agreed areas of revision.
3	Revised Certification Framework, Criteria, and Processes with Relevant Materials	Updated certification structure, criteria, verification process, and associated guidance/training materials incorporating SUP, waste management, and inclusion considerations.
4	Training Session for PIL and LNCCI	Facilitate one training session delivered for PIL and LNCCI on the revised certification framework and materials.

**The costs of the workshops/training session will be covered by PIL. The consultant is only responsible for supporting the planning and leading the facilitation of the workshops/training.*

6. Timeline & Working Days

The contract is expected to commence on 15 January 2026 and end on 30 April 2026 for an estimated 20 working days. The working location can be remote or on-site.

#	Deliverables	Timeframe	Estimated Working Days
1	Research and Initial Recommendations	January 15 – February 15, 2025	5
2	Facilitate Consultation Workshops (2)	February 1 – 28, 2026	3
3	Revised Certification Framework, Criteria, and Processes with Relevant Materials	March 1 – April 15, 2026	10
4	Training Session for PIL and LNCCI	April 15 – 30, 2026	2
Total No. of Working Days			20

7. Payment Details

There will be a total of 4 equal payment installments (25% each) provided upon the satisfactory completion and approval of each deliverable (1 through 4) based on the value of the budget submitted by the awarded service provider.

8. Qualifications

- Advanced university degree in environmental management, sustainable tourism, certification systems, or a related field.
- Minimum 7 years of professional experience in sustainability certification or standards development, ideally within tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Demonstrated expertise in waste management, circular economy, and single-use plastics reduction.
- Proven experience with benchmarking or aligning national/regional certification schemes to international standards (e.g. Travelife, GSTC, ISO 14001).
- Strong facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills; experience conducting participatory workshops with government and private sector.
- Excellent communication and report-writing skills in English; Lao language skills or regional experience in Southeast Asia are an asset.
- Strong skills in data collection, analysis, and report writing.
- Experience working with development organizations or donor-funded projects is an asset.
- Commitment to Plan International’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ethical standards.

Child Protection: Plan or its partners does not tolerate child abuse. All staff and consultants are selected and employed in line with the conditions of Plan’s Child Protection Policy. These include appropriate reference and background checks.

9. Application Process

Plan invites interested applicants to submit their application to Laos.procurement@plan-international.org, and copy to Chindavone.Keomanykhod@plan-international.org

The application deadline is **January 9th, 2026**. For any technical inquiries please contact connor.bedard@plan-international.org.

Please include the text **“Review and Strengthen the Lasting Laos Certification Programme”** in the email subject line and kindly include support documents as outlined below:

1. An expression of interest (1-page maximum).
2. An indicative work plan with timeframe (1-page maximum).
3. An indicative budget with a daily rate, any travel and other costs (must be inclusive of per diem, travel costs and other related government charge (Tax, VAT).
4. Curriculum Vitae of any persons mentioned in the work plan (*If a consulting firm or company, a company profile with: a company name, registered office address, physical address, telephone numbers, date of registration, registration number, copy of registration certificate, names of directors/proprietors and name of contact person*).

Note: *All applications received after the time of the deadline will not be accepted without exception. Please note that only the successful tender will be contacted.*