

Terms of reference

Consultancy for co-development of an action plan for watershed protection, using nature-based solutions (Oudomxay province)

1 - Background to the assignment

A – CCL and the project ADAEBIO2

The CCL (Comité de Coopération avec le Laos) has been involved in implementing rural development programs in Laos for about 45 years. Currently, CCL works in different provinces in Laos, including Phongsaly, Oudomxai and Bolikhamxai.

The project ADAEBio phase 2 “Project on Integrated rural development in Beng, La and Xay districts, Oudomxay province”, funded by Bread for the World, the French Development Agency and the EDF Group Foundation, 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.

B - Context

Located in Northern Laos, the Nam Phak River is the most important tributary to the Nam Ou (a tributary of the Mekong) and drains a territory of 3 342 km². Its source is located upstream in Namor district (Oudomxay province). It then crosses La district (Oudomxay province) and Khoa district (Phongsali province), where it meets the Nam Ou.

In August 2022, severe flooding caused by Tropical Storm Ma-On damaged agricultural land, homes and infrastructure in La District, increasing pressure on livelihoods¹. The resulting crop losses encouraged greater expansion into upland forests, exacerbating land degradation and flood risk. At the same time, recurring droughts, including a 41% rainfall decrease in the Nam Ou Basin in 2019, have reduced water availability, disrupted irrigation and affected rice production². Thus, the Nam Phak watershed was identified during Phase 1 of ADAEBio2 as a pilot basin for testing integrated water resource management approaches to address increasing flood and drought risks.

In 2025, a diagnosis was conducted by a water and environment expert to assess the hydro-geomorphological functioning of the Nam Phak watershed, identify hotspots, and inform participatory watershed management. The diagnosis used the HYCRES (Hydro-geomorphic Corridor Risk and Exposure System) framework to identify where hydrological pressures originate, how they move through the basin, and where they most affect communities and infrastructures. The study interpreted the connection between flooding, erosion and dry-season water scarcity. Several priority corridors were identified. One of these corridors was selected in the frame of the project for testing participatory integrated watershed management. Indeed, it includes 9 villages, among which 4 (Namleng,

¹ Vongphachanh M., Flooding Wrecks 90% of the Agricultural Land in Oudomxay, *The Laotian Times*, September 1, 2022. <https://laotiantimes.com/2022/09/01/flooding-destroys-90percent-agricultural-land-in-oudomxay/>

Lipes J., Weeks after tropical storm Ma-On batters northern Laos, residents struggle to recover, *Radio Free Asia*, September 10, 2022. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/storm-09102022171537.html>

Vongphachanh M., Oudomxay Estimates Over LAK 60 billion to Repair Roads, *The Laotian Times*, September 7, 2022. <https://laotiantimes.com/2022/09/07/oudomxay-estimate-over-lak-60-billion-to-repair-roads/>

² Climate change, global warming cause drought in Laos: experts, *Xinhuanet*, December 16, 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/16/c_138634910.htm?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Houaithong, Tangneuy, Mai) are currently targets of the project. Located in the west of La district, it carries about 1,285 ha of upstream sediment-source pressure, 1,324 ha of hydrological transmission, 689 ha of erosion-sensitive activity, 28.9 ha of built-up exposure and 242.2 ha of crop exposure. It is of strategic importance for La district.

Map of the priority corridors in La district – Each unit is a sub-watershed. The priority corridors are indicated in red. In the frame of the consultancy, only the priority corridor at the left of the district, surrounded by a yellow line, is targeted.

The result 1 of the specific objective 2 of the project is that “Communities within the Nam Phak watershed are organised to respond to climate change adaptation challenges and water resource conservation issues.”. Within this result, the following activities are planned:

Indicator: 1 hydrological (watershed) diagnosis of the Nam Phak River basin is achieved and disseminated

Indicator: At least 4 inter-community meetings, with at least 40 village leaders, are organised in Nam Phak River basin to brainstorm on the risks of floods, droughts and landslides

- **3. Formalisation of an action plan to reduce the risks of floods & droughts by the communities of the Nam Phak River Basin (based on the results of the inter-community concertation):** During inter-community meetings, actions will be identified to preserve water resources and reduce flood and drought risks. These actions will be described by villagers and basin stakeholders (method and technical means, identified implementation areas, stakeholders involved, estimated timeline and budget). Nature-based adaptation solutions should be identified at this stage. The document will be presented to local decision-makers (district and provincial governors, directors of relevant departments) for advocacy purposes.

Indicator: 1 action plan identifying levers to mitigate the risks of floods and droughts within the Nam Phak River basin is formalised and disseminated to local stakeholders

- **4. Implementation of nature-based solutions in the Nam Phak River Basin to reduce the vulnerability to floods & droughts (through input delivery and monitoring):** The project will support the implementation of pilot actions involving nature-based adaptation solutions identified by local stakeholders in the action plan for drought and flood risk reduction. These solutions could include: preserving river banks and riparian forests, preserving wetlands and floodplains, installing vegetation-based erosion barriers through spontaneous regrowth or tree planting, earthworks, and planting plant cover on slopes to reduce runoff.

Indicator: At least 3 pilot nature-based solutions are experimented in the Nam Phak River basin

These ToR relate to the activities 2 and 3. The consultancy will work in a limited number of villages in the designated hydrological corridor (cf. B-context) in order to organise participatory meetings and co-develop an action plan.

2 – Objectives and outputs of the consultancy

A – Specific objectives of the consultancy

Specific objective: “To establish a participatory process enabling communities within the identified hydrological corridor to co-develop an action plan based on nature-based solutions for improved watershed management and climate change adaptation”

The support expected from the consultant is primarily methodological. The implementation of a participatory approach for watershed management represents a pilot process for the project and requires specific facilitation skills, methodologies, and tools that are currently limited within the project team. The consultant will therefore provide guidance on the design and facilitation of an appropriate participatory process, ensuring that communities are effectively involved in the identification of challenges, the prioritisation of solutions, and the development of collective action plans.

In addition, nature-based solutions (NbS) encompass a wide range of possible interventions, and their relevance and feasibility depend strongly on local environmental conditions, community priorities, technical requirements, and available project resources. The consultant will work closely with the project team and participating communities in identifying, assessing, and selecting NbS that are adapted to the Nam Phak watershed context and realistic to implement within the scope and resources of the project.

As this is a pilot process, particular attention will be given to documenting lessons learned, identifying enabling factors and constraints, and developing recommendations for future implementation and scaling. By the end of the consultancy, the project team is expected to have strengthened its technical and facilitation capacity regarding participatory watershed management approaches and nature-based solutions. The facilitated process should also ensure that participating communities are actively engaged and motivated to pursue the jointly developed actions beyond the consultancy period.

B – Outputs of the consultancy

Output 1: “A participatory methodology and tools for inter-community consultation are developed and transferred to the project team”

Several steps contribute to this output. First, the consultant proposes a methodology and associated tools to facilitate the participatory process and identifies potential nature-based solutions that may be adapted to the context, together with criteria for assessing and prioritising them. Then the project team is trained on this methodology before implementing community concertation. Finally, after the community workshops, the lessons learned are discussed with the project team, for adjustment of the methodology.

Output 2: “Communities within the selected hydrological corridor have jointly identified and prioritised feasible nature-based solutions through a participatory inter-community consultation process”

These workshops will take place in the identified priority hydrological corridor, which includes the following target villages (Khmu ethnic group): Namleng, Houaithong, Tangneuy, Mai. The number of villages involved, the profiles and number of people participating, as well as the number of village level and/or inter-village level workshops will be proposed under the output 1, according to the available budget and validated by the project team.

Output 3: “An action plan and recommendations for implementation and scaling are developed”

This action plan should be the fruit of community workshops and reflect the initiatives that communities wish to implement. It should include a timeline of implementation, the technical details of the NbS, the stakeholders involved, the priority areas for implementation, an indicative budget and resource requirements. Moreover, it should include recommendations for scaling up this action plan in the future. This document will be used for both project implementation and advocacy to the local government decision-makers at the levels of the district and the province.

3 – Deliverables and timeline

N°	Deliverable	Timeline
<u>1</u>	Inception report, including methodology, tools and recommended NbS options. This first report is developed in collaboration with the project team.	Early November
<u>2</u>	Training to the project team (~12 participants) about the methodology, tools and recommended NbS.	End of November
<u>3</u>	Facilitation of inter-community workshops	End of November
<u>4</u>	Report documenting the project team training, the community workshops, key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for refining the methodology.	Mid-December
<u>5</u>	Action plan and recommendations for scaling	Mid-December

4 – Indicative workplan

A **tentative** workplan is detailed in the table below:

Activity	Expected number of days
Development of the methodology, tools and recommended NbS, in collaboration with the project team.	4
Training to the project team (~12 participants) about the methodology, tools and recommended NbS.	1
Facilitation of inter-community workshops	4
Preparation of report (English) on the training session to the project team, on the facilitation of inter-community workshops and review of the methodology.	1

Preparation of action plan and recommendations for scaling (Lao and English versions) – Validation with community and review if necessary	2
TOTAL	12 (tentative)

5 - Conditions

This number of working days (12) is indicative. It will be discussed with the selected consultant and based on the project budget forecast.

This consultancy is expected to take place in Oudomxai province, in Xai and La districts. Trips between Vientiane and Oudomxai, as well as transportation within Oudomxai province, will be covered by CCL. Accommodation and DSA will be covered by CCL, in line with the current policy.

The maximum amount of the financial proposal shall not exceed USD 5,000.

6 - Selection process

The CCL is looking for one consultant (individual or legal entity).

The application file should include:

- A Curriculum Vitae of the consultant(s) involved, with a focus on the consultant's relevant experience in participatory planning, watershed management and nature-based solutions and/or community facilitation
- A proposed methodology, including the participatory approach, facilitation methods, proposed tools.
- A proposed work plan and schedule, including the estimated number of workshops, participants, and villages to be covered within the available budget.
- Preliminary ideas on the types of nature-based solutions that could be considered in this context.
- 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 outputs of the consultancy.
- Any other documents developed by the applicant and that could be relevant to the topic of the consultancy (ex: previous manuals, participatory tools, training videos, etc.).

The following skills, experience and criteria will be assessed:

- Background and experience in watershed management and nature-based solutions – 20%
- Experience in participatory approaches and facilitation tools, particularly in the context of working with ethnic groups in Northern Laos – 15%
- Training and capacity-building skills, including experience in organising training of trainers and transferring knowledge and skills to local teams – 15%
- Quality and relevance of the proposed methodology and technical approach – 20%
- Financial proposal: cost-effectiveness of the proposed approach – 30%

Proposals will first be screened for eligibility. Financial proposals exceeding the maximum budget limit of USD 5,000 will be automatically disqualified.

For any question about this call for proposal, please contact, before August 31, 2026: Mr Dorian DEJACE, dorian.dejace@ccl-laos.org.

Candidates should send their application file per email by August 31, 2026, to:

- CCL Director, Ms. Manivone Vorachak: manivone@ccl-laos.org
- CCL M&E and rural development assistant, Mr Rémi Septours: Remi.septours@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.