
TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Evaluation of Communication Activities for DSTIA Project

1. Background

The Dam Safety Technical and Institutional Assistance to Laos PDR (DSTIA) is a Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded project implemented by Helvetas Swiss Interoperation Laos with the Department of Energy, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Faculty of Engineering, National University of Laos, EDL-GEN and the Lao Association on Dam. Project implemented a series of communication activities in 2025 to enhance public awareness on dam safety including general public, local authorities (Provincial, District and Villages), stakeholder engagement, and dissemination of project results. Key communication channels included:

- Social media outreach through Helvetas/SDC/partners Facebook posts
- Broadcast programs via Lao National Radio
- Print media coverage in Lao national newspapers about the project events
- Posters of the project framework and objectives
- Short VDO on YouTube

As the project progresses, there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness, reach, and impact of these communication activities to inform future communication strategies and improve outreach.

2. Objectives of the Evaluation

The overall objective is to assess the visibility, relevance, and effectiveness of DSTIA communication activities implemented in 2025 across different channels, and their contribution to increasing awareness and understanding of dam safety among **target audiences, namely: general public, local authorities, project stakeholders, and dam developers.**

2.1 Specific objectives include:

1. **Understand how people were exposed to communication activities across different channels:**
 - Social media (Helvetas and partner-managed platforms)
 - Radio broadcasts
 - Newspaper publications
 - Printed and audiovisual materials
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- 2. Assess audience engagement and interaction with communication content, using:**
 - Available quantitative indicators (e.g., social media interactions, estimated media reach where available)
 - Qualitative evidence (e.g., audience feedback, stakeholder observations).
- 3. Assess audience understanding, recall, and perceived relevance of key messages, including:**
 - Ability to recall key messages
 - Understanding of dam safety concepts
 - Perceived usefulness of the information
- 4. Assess the quality and consistency of communication content across channels, including:**
 - Clarity and accessibility of messages
 - Alignment with project objectives
 - Consistency of messaging across formats
- 5. Identify what worked well, what did not work as expected, and what could be improved in the communication approach, including:**
 - Choice of communication channels
 - Types of content used
 - How different audiences were targeted
- 6. Provide practical recommendations for improving future communication activities.**

3. Scope of Work

The analysis will be based on available and accessible data. Where detailed metrics or audience data are available, these should be analyzed. Where such data is not available, the consultant will rely on publicly available information and stakeholder or audience feedback.

3.1 Social Media Communication

- Review the type of content published and its purpose
- Assess engagement with the content
- Analyze clarity, relevance, and consistency of messages
- Identify examples of content that performed well or less well

3.2 Lao National Radio Broadcast

- Map number, duration, and timing of broadcasts
- Assess estimated audience reach based on broadcaster data (if available)
- Assess clarity and accessibility of messages
- Analyse audience recall and understanding

3.3 Lao Newspaper Publications

- Review content and tone of articles
- Assess tone, clarity, and consistency of messages

- Consider placement and visibility (circulation, readership) and credibility
- Analyse perceived credibility and influence through audience feedback

4. Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation should address the following questions:

- To what extent did the communication activities reach the intended target groups, and through which channels?
- Which communication channels were most useful for informing and engaging different target groups, and why?
- How clear, consistent, and useful were the messages across platforms, and what do people remember from them?
- What worked well and what could be improved in the communication approach?

5. Methodology

The evaluation will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

The consultant is expected to propose a detailed methodology in the inception phase, building on the objectives and evaluation questions outlined in this TOR.

The methodology should include:

- Review of relevant communication materials across different channels
- Analysis of available data on communication performance
- Collection of feedback from key target groups (e.g. interviews and/or short surveys)
- Consultations with project staff, partners, and media actors

The approach should remain flexible and adapted to data availability, ensuring that findings are based on credible and well-explained evidence

6. Deliverables

The consultant/team will produce the following:

Inception Report

- Refined evaluation approach
- Proposed methodology and tools
- Data collection plan
- Workplan

Draft Evaluation Report

- Preliminary findings
- Initial analysis across communication channels
- Emerging conclusions and recommendations

Final Evaluation Report

- Executive summary
- Final findings and analysis

- Lessons learned
- Practical and actionable recommendations

The evaluation is expected to be conducted over 8 weeks:

Activity	Duration
Inception phase	1 week
Data collection	4 weeks
Analysis, drafting	2 weeks
Final reporting	1 week

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluator/Consultant

- • Design and implement the evaluation
- • Collect and analyze data
- • Prepare reports

DSTIA Project Team

- • Provide access to communication materials and data
- • Facilitate stakeholder contacts
- • Review and provide feedback on reports

8. Required Qualifications

The evaluator/consultant should have:

- Proven experience in evaluating communication, media, or public awareness activities, preferably in development projects
- Experience in conducting qualitative research (e.g. interviews, surveys, stakeholder consultations) and analysing mixed data sources
- Ability to assess both digital and traditional communication channels, including interpreting limited or incomplete data
- Strong analytical and report writing skills, with the ability to present clear and practical recommendations
- Familiarity with the Lao PDR context or similar settings is an asset
- Fluency in English; knowledge of Lao is an advantage

9. Reporting and Management

The evaluator will report to the Project Management Unit of DSTIA.

10. Budget

The budget will be determined based on:

- Scope of work
- Duration
- Consultant qualifications

11. Ethical Considerations

- Ensure confidentiality of data and respondents
- Maintain impartiality and independence
- Use data solely for evaluation purposes

12. Deadline

Deadline: 4 September 2026



Verify by
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