



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT
DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

Ref. No. : 08515 / DOR
Date : 31 March 2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESS OF INTEREST
INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL PROJECT ADVISOR FOR COMPONENT 3.1 TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURAL TRADE,
SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) MANAGEMENT, REFERENCE No. ICS-033

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT); Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF); Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC); Ministry of Public Security (MOPS); Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) of Lao PDR have received financing support from the World Bank's (WB) International Development Association (IDA) to implement the Southeast Asia Regional Economic Corridor and Connectivity (SEARECC) with a project duration of six (6) years starting from 4th quarter of year 2022. SEARECC consists of five (5) components as follow : (1) Lao PDR and Regional Connectivity Enhancement, (2) Logistics Services Development and Vorder-Crossing Management, (3) Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Regulatory Framework in Agriculture, Transport, and Investment Planning, (4) Project Management and (5) Contingency Emergency Response.

The Department of Planning and Finance (DPF) of the MPWT intends to engage a part-time International Consultant to provide technical assistance and advisory support to Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture in managing and implementing the activities of sub-Component 3.1 of the SEARECC project, including preparation of annual work plan, monitoring and keeping tracks of project implementation, preparation of project progress reports and timely advisory support on technical and managerial issues of the overall project implementation. The Consultant will provide support to DOA, DLF, DAEC, FDD and Agritech center in consultation with the World Bank team in oversight the implementation of the consulting service to support the implementation of sub-component 3.1. He will also support in preparation of technical specifications of procurement packages, monitoring and reporting and managing the tasks of the SPS TAs, ensure compliance of the SPS measures to increase safe trade of agricultural and food products.

This shall be a part-time assignment with estimated time input 60 person-days to be worked within 12-month consultancy service period, with possibility of renewal based on satisfactory performance review and Project needs. The assignment is planned to start in May-June 2023. The full ToR for the assignment can be found at the following website www.mpwt.gov.la or can be sent to candidates upon written request to the e-mail address below.

The SEARECC Project now invites eligible individual consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultant should provide information (CV, Expression of Interest, other supporting information, if any) demonstrating that s/he has the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. In order to qualify for this position, the candidates shall meet the following experience and competence requirements:

- Master's degree in agricultural sciences preferably in agriculture entomology, plant pathology or other related fields.
- At least 12 years of relevant professional experiences in SPS management and implementation.
- At least one similar assignment successfully completed within a period of the past 5 years.
- Demonstrated experience in SPS in Lao PDR or in ASEAN countries.
- Experience in project management including monitoring and evaluation of the World Bank/ADB funded project.
- Fluency in English (spoken and written) and good presentation skills.
- Demonstrated ability to perform independent, high-quality research and experience in preparing, supervising and evaluating the collection of qualitative data and assessment.
- Proved good coordination, reporting and communication skills in English and Lao languages and Computer literate, complete knowledge of the MS Office and MS Project.
- Willingness to travel to project provinces as needed.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" 4th edition of November 2020 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Competitive Selection of Individual Consultants method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by 25 April 2023, 16:00 o'clock Lao time (submissions via email are also acceptable). Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Department Planning and Finance, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Lanexang Avenue, Phonxai Village, Saysettha District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

Attention : Ms. Vanh Dilaphanh
Director General of Department of Planning and Finance
Email : proc.dpf.mpwt@gmail.com with Cc : k_litta@yahoo.com, dilaphanhnana@yahoo.com, vanthieng_06@yahoo.com and viengphet1@gmail.com



Mr. Litta Khattiya
Director General, Department of Roads (DOR-MPWT)
Head of SEARECC's Project Procurement Committee



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

SOUTHEAST ASIA REGIONAL ECONOMIC CORRIDOR AND CONNECTIVITY (SEARECC) PROJECT
(PROJECT ID No. P176088; IDA CREDIT No. 7102-LA)

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

International Technical Project Advisor
FOR COMPONENT 3.1 TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURAL TRADE, SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS)
MANAGEMENT, REFERENCE No. ICS-033

1. Background

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT); Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF); Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC); Ministry of Public Security (MOPS); Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) of Lao PDR have received financing support from the World Bank's (WB) International Development Association (IDA) to implement the Southeast Asia Regional Economic Corridor and Connectivity (SEARECC) with a project duration of six (6) years starting from 4th quarter of year 2022 to May 2028.

The Southeast Asia Regional Economic Corridor and Connectivity (SEARECC) seeks to improve the domestic and regional transport connectivity and logistics facilities, with associated policy reforms for increased economic activities along selected transport corridors in Northern Lao PDR. The project scope includes improvement of transport connectivity and logistics services in Lao PDR, trade facilitation, border crossing control management, and agriculture trade along the NR2 corridor and five provinces in the corridor catchment area: Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Xayabouli, and Luangprabang. NR2, 295 km long and a part of ASEAN highway no 13, consists of NR2-West (145 km) connecting with the Thai border at Huai Kone via NR4A and NR2-East (150 km) connecting with the Vietnamese border at Tay Trang, Dien Bien Phu province. As a major road corridor, it crosses the new Lao-China rail corridor in Muang Xai, creating the potential for multimodal transport connectivity for both north-south and east-west routes connecting Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, and China. The development of NR2 provides linkages to Thailand, Vietnam, and China, which can help achieve Lao PDR's aspiration to become a land-linked country. The proposed project will help to attract more investment, boost more cross-border trade, and generate more employment in the surrounding areas.

Trade in agricultural products is among the top 5 in terms of both value and volume across ASEAN. Improved regional connectivity and integration thus offer significant opportunities for Lao PDR to increase exports of agriculture products. Lao PDR's agriculture system is mainly subsistence farming and transitioning from subsistence, agricultural commercialization has gradually brought about structural changes in several value chains (i.e., increased production volume, processing, packaging, and exports), albeit on a small scale so far. Growth rate of agriculture was only by about 3 percent during the last decade due to the prevailing levels of low agricultural productivity, mainly constrained by inadequate access to farm inputs, lack of value chain development and market linkages and low adoption of agricultural technologies, poor compliance with product standards, and high transportation and logistics costs to access markets.

With growing consumer demand for high-quality rice, maize, and 'clean and safe' vegetables, there are both niches and expanding markets for high-quality, consumer-safe, and environmentally sustainable foods and agricultural products – which Lao PDR is producing. But the key challenges in regional agricultural trade are the limited capacity of domestic producers to apply sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards, practice Good Agricultural Practices (GAP),

Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHP), limited transport access to markets, and high logistics cost to ensure that agricultural products are produced, packed, handled, and stored to minimize the risk of a microbial and residue of substances which may be harmful for the human health to reduce food safety hazard.

The capacity of local authorities in 5 northern target provinces to provide regulatory and scientific laboratory testing services for traders' compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards is weak while there are some main existing laboratory facilities in the Northern Agri-Tech Center ATC in Xay district, Oudomxay province designated as a regional laboratory to serve the international agricultural trade of northern provinces, but this laboratory system and its infrastructures were poorly maintained, lack of necessary equipment and ineffectively used. These laboratory facilities are also not yet accredited and recognized by trading partners, especially by China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Most of the SPS-related tasks are centralized and the lack of capacity of local authorities to operationalize established procedures for scientific verification of SPS remains challenging.

Promoting agricultural trade through investment in improving sanitary and phytosanitary standard (SPS) management capacity and export business processes will help not only leverage local producers and traders to integrate into regional and global value chains but also help reduce documentary transaction time, costs, and transportation distance, and improve their capacity to upgrade product quality, standard and scientific certification system to meet the market requirements of neighboring countries such as China, Thailand and Vietnam, and other trading partners.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) are to improve regional and domestic trade and climate resilient transport connectivity along an East-West corridor in Southeast Asia, and to provide immediate and effective response in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency. The proposed PDO-level results indicators are:

- A. Improved regional and domestic transport connectivity
 1. Travel time along the selected sections of the NR2 corridor (hours)
 2. Number of people provided with improved, climate resilient road access
 3. Beneficiaries expressing satisfaction with transport connectivity (percentage)
- B. Improved cross-border trade efficiency
 4. Average cross-border processing time at selected Laos-Vietnam and Laos-Thailand border checkpoints (hours)
 5. Time taken for SPS certification in agricultural trade (day)

The project has five components, and nine sub-components:

- Component 1: Lao PDR and Regional Connectivity Enhancement
 - Sub-component 1.1: NR2 climate resilient improvement and maintenance.
 - Sub-component 1.2: Local Road climate resilient improvement and maintenance.
 - Sub-component 1.3: Improvement of border crossing facilities.
 - Sub-component 1.4: Implementation and supervision support.
- Component 2: Logistics services development and border crossing management
 - Sub-component 2.1: Logistics facilities development.
 - Sub-component 2.2: Regional integration and cross-board transport agreements.
 - Sub-component 2.3: Strengthening capacity of Customs, Immigration and Quarantine and boarder management.
- Component 3: Strengthening institutional capacity and regulatory framework in agriculture, transport, and investment planning
 - Sub-component 3.1: Support on agricultural trade and SPS management.
 - Sub-component 3.2: Institutional capacity development for transport sector.
- Component 4: Project Management
- Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response

The scope of the sub-component 3.1 is to support on enhancing agricultural trade and improving the SPS Management system. Capacity development to support agricultural trade will focus on improving the enabling environment for agricultural trade activities. The key activities include: (i) financing technical assistance to review and improve business process for cross border trade for agriculture products through streamlining of export and import permits, raising awareness of traders' compliance with SPS requirements, and simplifying the registration and scientific certification

system of farm inputs; (ii) providing trainings to strengthen operational capacity for the MAF, Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs), and DAFOs in agricultural trade promotion; and (iii) capacity development to address key gender gaps in agricultural value chain to enhance trade including unequal access to information for women, barriers registering businesses, accessing financial credit, technology and market.

Capacity Building for SPS Management will focus on capacity building of MAF, Ministry of Health (MOH), PAFOs, District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFOs), and border checkpoints for compliance of SPS requirements and reduce trade barriers in the targeted provinces and districts. Mainly, the activities cover (i) financing technical assistance to review and improve legislations relevant for SPS; (ii) providing training to strengthen institutional and operational capacity in SPS management; and (iii) financing technical assistance to carry out a scientific laboratory assessment for upgrade accredit/recognize and testing services.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The International Technical Advisor will provide technical assistance and advisory support to Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture in managing and implementing the activities of sub-Component 3.1 of the SEARECC project, including preparation of annual work plan, monitoring and keeping tracks of project implementation, preparation of project progress reports and timely advisory support on technical and managerial issues of the overall project implementation.

The Consultant will provide support to DOA, DLF, DAEC, FDD and Agritech center in consultation with the World Bank team in oversight the implementation of the consulting service to support the implementation of sub-component 3.1. He will also support in preparation of technical specifications of procurement packages, monitoring and reporting and managing the tasks of the SPS TAs, insure compliance of the SPS measures to increase safe trade of agricultural and food products.

3. Scope of Work:

The scope and specific tasks of **the International Technical Advisor** will include, but not limited to the following tasks:

Task 1: Provide support and advice to DOA and Technical Departments of MAF and PAFOs in their preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Budget based on the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) and PIM for the project implementation.

- 1) Review and assist Component Implementing Unit (CIM or DOA), technical departments of MAF and PAFOs in their preparation of annual work plans and budgets based on the description of project activities in PAD.
- 2) Review and update all project templates for project activity implementation based on the preliminary templates, cost tables, etc.
- 3) Serve as the focal point to clarify queries and questions requested by implementing agencies to ensure that they understand and follow approaches in the agricultural trad and SPS management activity implementation.
- 4) Project documents are properly disseminated to and understood by all project stakeholders through training and dissemination workshops.

Task 2: Consolidate and prepare the six-month project progress report.

- 1) Consolidate project outputs, working documents and technical reports and conceptualize them into the preparation of the project progress report.
- 2) Draft the six-month project progress report of the overall project implementation (including progress of project activities, financial management (IFRs) and procurements in one report.
- 3) Work closely with members of DOA, DLF, DAEC, FDD and AgriTech Center, and PAFOs to get feedbacks and finalize the progress report.
- 4) Prepare project briefing notes and short executive summaries for the sub-component manager and higher management if required.

Task 3: Monitoring and keeping tracks of project implementation outputs delivered by DOA, DLF, DAEC, FDD and ATC, as well as Technical Consultants to be hired under various packages.

- 1) Assist CIUs in recruitment of consultants under various packages.
- 2) Assist CIU to monitor the AWPB implementation and track the agreed project activities, inputs and performance of implementing agencies, consultants and stakeholders in delivering outputs in a timely manner.

- 3) Enhance the effectiveness of the technical consultants by pursuing adequate preparation and follow-up of their field work.
- 4) Establish a project M&E system and reporting requirements that link outputs, reporting of result evidence in response to the update of the sub-component 3.1 results framework, indicators and targets.
- 5) Identify risks, issues, challenges and delays that affect project performance, progress and achievement of results.
- 6) Advise the CIU/DOA with remedial actions and mitigation efforts to address identified project issues, challenges and delays if they arise.

Task 4: Support NPMO, Technical Departments of MAF and MOIC, PAFOs and PICOs in drafting terms of references (TORs), technical specifications of goods and works.

- 1) Assist CIU/DOA to draft, review and revise TORs, technical specifications of goods and works.
- 2) Oversee and coordinate with project consultant packages to ensure that they are fulfilling their ToRs in delivering intended outputs and results.
- 3) Assist CIU/DOA in handling all administrative matters relating to the consulting company's or individual contractual arrangements.
- 4) Guide CIU/DOA in support of financial management and procurement specialists to ensure that all processes are in line with project procedures to facilitate flows of project funds, procurement of goods, works and services in a timely manner.
- 5) Check consistency between annual workplan and budget, procurement plan and disbursement plan with support from procurement specialist, financial management specialist and national project advisor.
- 6) Ensure that appropriate quality assurance measures are established and functioning effectively to ensure quality delivery of project outputs and recommendation implementation.

Task 5: Assist the CIU/DOA in liaison and coordination with DLF, DAEC, FDD, ATC, PAFOs and development partners as well as stakeholders in agricultural trade and SPS management implementation.

- 1) Liaise with other SPS projects in Lao PDR and other GMS countries, and enhance harmonization of Lao PDR SPS measures with other countries in GMS and ASEAN
- 2) Help the overall coordination of the project implementation to ensure that all processes are achieved in a timely and coordinated manner to deliver physical outputs on the ground.
- 3) Ensure coordination between all government agencies involved in the sub-component 3.1 project implementation by disseminating information and setting adequate communication and channels and decision-making processes.
- 4) Assist in ensuring that there is national level inter-agency coordination and knowledge sharing with other projects and programs of other agencies operating in the target provinces, to maximize the synergy of development.
- 5) Advise and manage cross-cutting issues relevant to project implementation covering transactional transparency, inclusion, gender equity, climate change adaptation etc.
- 6) Any other tasks as assigned by the CIU/DOA.

4. Output Reporting Requirements:

The Consultant will be required to deliver the following tasks:

- Monthly reports, Quarterly reports, and Assignment Completion report.
- Field Mission reports, where applicable.
- Technical reports and documents
- Smooth coordination of key technical agencies for sub-component 3.1
- Project management implementation, annual workplan and budget, procurement plan, monitoring and evaluation system of the project
- Smooth implementation of project activities and deliver outputs on timely manner.

5. Duty Station and Duration of the Assignment

Supervision Arrangements: The consultant will work under the overall supervision of Director General of Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, with day-to-day supervision from the designated representative

of Department of Agriculture and respective technical department under this sub-component 3.1. The consultant will also closely work with the Department of Planning and Finance, MPWT, which is PCC and PSC 's secretariate.

Term of Engagement: The total estimated input for this assignment will be an intermittent for 12 months with total of 60 working days, with possibility of renewal based on satisfactory performance review and Project requirements. This first initial contract expected to be start in March 2023.

6. Consultant Selection Criteria

Consultant Selection Criteria: To qualify for the assignment, the consultant shall meet the following requirements:

- Master's degree in agricultural sciences preferably in agriculture entomology, plant pathology or other related fields.
- At least 12 years of relevant professional experiences in SPS management and implementation.
- At least one similar assignment successfully completed within a period of the past 5 years.
- Demonstrated experience in SPS in Lao PDR or in ASEAN countries.
- Experience in project management including monitoring and evaluation of the World Bank/ADB funded project.
- Fluency in English (spoken and written) and good presentation skills.
- Demonstrated ability to perform independent, high-quality research and experience in preparing, supervising and evaluating the collection of qualitative data and assessment.
- Proved good coordination, reporting and communication skills in English and Lao languages and Computer literate, complete knowledge of the MS Office and MS Project.
- Willingness to travel to project provinces as needed.