

Terms of Reference

Project Evaluation

The End of Project Evaluation of Fund III and PRFIII Additional Financing (PRF 2017-2024)

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the requirements relating to project evaluation mandate for the Poverty Reduction Fund III and Its AF from 2017-June 2024.

This Terms of Reference (ToR) describe the purpose, context, objectives (including guiding indicative evaluation questions), and scope of the evaluation. They further describe the evaluation process and the expected deliverables.

2. Background information and context of the evaluation

Since 2003, the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) is the key initiative of the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) established by a Prime Ministerial Decree (073/PM) in 2002 to eradicate mass poverty, in line with the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) aiming to lift the country out from the list of Least Developed Country by 2020. PRF is designed with the main goal of improving access to and utilization of key public services, by building critical social and economic infrastructure at the village level within the country's poorest communities.

The 3rd phase of PRF (PRFIII) has been operational in 43 poor districts of 10 provinces from January 2017 and shall be closed in June 2021. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) execute the project through a team of multi-disciplinary specialists from the central to district levels. PRFIII is co-financed at a total US\$ 54 million funded by the Government of Lao PDR (US\$ 6 million), the World Bank (US\$ 30 million), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (US\$ 18 million).

The objective is to improve the access to and the utilization of basic infrastructure and services for the project's targeted poor communities in a sustainable manner through inclusive community and local development processes. The project focused on basic infrastructure improvement and pilot livelihood activities.

PRF III had been working in 43 districts in 10 provinces, which classified into 263 Kumbans covered 1,820 villages (131 poorest, 1,395 poor and 294 moderately poor villages) have been prepared, with total 853,447 population. The period of project was scheduled to end by December 2019, however, due to the delay of Government co-financing contribution and also some remaining budget of SDC, therefore, it was agreed to extend the project activity to the end of 2021, which had been operated in those 6 provinces (Luangnamtha, Luanprabang, Savannakhet, Saravanh, Sekong, and Attapeu), funded by SDC and GOL's co-financing of PRF III, and all works had been completed by June 2022.

At the same time, the PRFIII Additional Financing or PRFIII AF (2020-2024), which has been built on the successful experience of the previous PRFs. It is proposed to be a transition period from nature of PRF that would link to the new project. It is a part of the Nutrition Convergence Programme¹, it works together with other projects in the same areas such as RRPM, WASH, and HANSA in the four northern provinces namely Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Huaphanh and Xiengkhouang. The PRF changed from the basic infrastructure improvement-oriented to the new livelihood and nutrition elements of the revised objective by i) providing capacity-building assistance to form, nurture, and strengthen Self Help Groups (SHG) and Producers' Groups (PG); and

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- ¹ HANSA Project and RRPM Project will cover all 878 villages.
 - PRF-III Additional Financing will cover 465 villages and AFN 400 villages with certain number of overlapping villages.
 - Scaling-Up Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SSWASH) Project will likely to cover 450 villages, depending upon community demand.
 - Target for nutrition convergence is 528 villages which will receive all interventions at full implementation of at least 3 projects.

ii) forming and strengthening groups of pregnant women and mothers with children under 2 years old to grow diverse and nutritious foods in their gardens, year-round, and to process and cook food for themselves and their children's consumption. That aims to reduce the stunting of children by 20% in the target areas and by 1.75% reduction in stunting nationally.

The PRFIII AF's objective has thus been revised to, "improve access to community prioritized basic services, as well as to support the production and consumption of nutritious foods in the Project's targeted poor communities", funded by the World Bank in amount US\$ 22.5 million (loan). This additional financing will scale up livelihood and nutrition initiatives into in the four other PRF priority provinces, in 12 districts, where child stunting incidence is found to be high.

The AF follows the structure of the original Project from previous PRFs, and comprises four components: Component 1: Community Development Sub-grants; Component 2: Local and Community Development Capacity Building; and Component 3: Project Management; and Component 4: Nutrition Enhancing Livelihood Development. The following paragraphs briefly describe the revised and new activities that financed under PRFIII AF in each component.

The PRF III AF consists of four components, as described below:

- **Component 1** – Community Development Sub-Grants designed to support bottom-up local development planning and implementation of community driven sub-projects for social development through community sub-grants. Subproject implementation approach. As the average subproject financing will be considerably lower than under the original PRFs project (average cost US\$ 14,500, the focus will be on smaller subprojects that can be implemented by the community (also known as "Community Force Account" or "CFA") rather than large sub-projects implemented by private sector contractors. All sub-projects will support agricultural productivity.
- **Component 2** – Local and Community Development Capacity-Building and Learning. The main activities financed under this Component will be capacity building by project consultants and government staff as well as direct support to implementation in the field. There will also be modest resources available for occasionally engaging technical specialists to strengthen implementation activities such as microfinance or nutrition specialists.
- **Component 3** – Project Management which is to finance the costs of implementing PRF III activities, including remuneration of national, provincial and district PRF staff; associated equipment and operating costs; accounting, procurement, financial management, internal controls, auditing, and other specialized areas.
- **Component 4** – Nutrition Enhancing Livelihood Development: This component will be significantly scaled up, with additional subcomponents and activities. Subcomponent (4.1) will be expanded from capacity building of existing SHGs to the establishment of new SHGs through seed grants and ongoing technical support as well as the addition of Producer Groups (PGs) to enhance SHG member access to formal markets through village level commodity aggregation and value addition. Farmer Nutrition Groups (FNGs). Comprising mothers and children in the 1,000-day window, one FNG will be established in each of the 481 target villages to provide sustainable, community managed nutrition platforms for practical peer learning, home visits and collective group support for food processing, cooking and child feeding with own agriculture and livestock produce.

3. Objective, scope and focus of the evaluation

3.1. Purpose and objectives

The consultants are expected to draft an End Evaluation report of the PRF3 AND PRF3 AF projects before the project closure on June 30rd, 2024. The End Evaluation is about telling the story of the project, focusing on the outcomes, the factors that contributed to achieving the outcomes (and

the factors that may have limited achievement of outcomes), and the lessons learned. It covers, among other things, the degree to which the Project's Development Objectives (PDOs) and results have been achieved and provides lessons learned. Audiences for the End Evaluation are the PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project team, the World Bank Task Team, the government and their agencies, stakeholders and beneficiaries and the general public that has an interest in the project. The consultants will also conduct a technical audit of infrastructures from PRF3 (small sample) AF, which will also capture some of the indicators of the Results Framework (% of subproject activities of high technical quality and % of PRF built infrastructure in a functioning quality). The consultants will also conduct a small satisfaction survey of beneficiaries from PRF3 AF 2nd batch villages, which will capture one indicator from the (RF) (% of households in PRF beneficiary villages satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRF III). Both the technical audit of infrastructures and the satisfaction survey will inform the end evaluation report regarding PRF3 AF.

3.2. Scope

Consultant Duties and Accountabilities:

- Carry out primary and secondary research (consisting of reviewing Project documentation and MIS data as well as interviewing PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project staff, government officials, donors and Bank staff involved in the Project); the consultant could include a field visit of an PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project site.
- Conduct discussions with the PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project team, the implementing agency, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, as needed.
- Conduct a technical audit of infrastructures (small sample) from PRF3 AF villages, which will capture 2 indicators of the Results Framework (% of subproject activities of high technical quality and % of PRF built infrastructure in a functioning quality)
- Conduct a small satisfaction survey of beneficiaries (small sample) from PRF3 AF 2nd batch villages, which will capture one indicator from the (RF) (% of households in PRF beneficiary villages satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRF III).
- Review the final project indicators (achievements) prepared by the project team, to assess consistency (results framework and other indicators).
- Work with the PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project team to draft the end evaluation according to the guidelines provided by the project team/World Bank. The end evaluation should include, among other aspects:
 - (i) Description of the project story line, including the operation's context, the rationale for the operation, and the relevance of the operation's objectives during preparation and at completion (i.e., for Cambodia's development policies and/or programs);
 - (ii) Assessment of the outcomes of the operation against the agreed objectives; with a focus on providing (qualitative and/or quantitative) evidence of the achievement of the operation's objectives, and of the contribution of the supported activities and outputs to the project's development outcomes;
 - (iii) Assessment of the key factors and events pertaining to the World Bank, PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project team, government, co-financiers, other partners, and the external environment during preparation and implementation, that affected (i.e., contributed to and/or limited) performance and outcomes;
 - (iv) Evaluation of the project team's own performance during the preparation and implementation of the operation with special emphasis on lessons learned that may be helpful in the future; and
 - (v) Description of the proposed arrangements for sustainability of impacts and future operation of the project (i.e., continuation of project activities beyond Bank financing).

Special attention will be given to the data requirements of the evaluation, including the need to assemble sufficient results and for accountability and learning lessons. The end evaluation is expected to pay particular attention to gender and ethnic minorities, looking at results achieved, and specific actions (if any) undertaken during implementation to support women and ethnic minorities participation and benefits from PRF3 AND PRF3 AF project.

4. Evaluation process and methods

4.1. Evaluation methodology

In order to achieve the above objectives, the evaluators will:

- review related project documents, reports and previous assessments (see list provided below).
- use available projects data from PRF MIS database system. and complement with discussions and interviews with key project staff in PRF teams at national, provincial and district level.

The technical audit of infrastructures will assess the quality of infrastructures construction by: (i) assessing the quality of works in the field (using detailed inspection checklist), comparing the quality of infrastructures built to actual technical design documents, technical drawings, planned budget and to government sector set standards; (ii) identifying change from original drawings or budget, looking at unit cost data, etc. *The evaluation of infrastructures functioning and benefits to beneficiaries* will assess: (i) the level of functioning of infrastructures (assess whether infrastructures functions completely, does not function in parts, had functioned, but now damage and never functioned); (ii) sustainability of the infrastructures; (iii) benefits from infrastructures to direct beneficiaries; (iv) sustainability of the benefits to direct beneficiaries; (v) usage of infrastructures; etc. It will include calculating 2 indicators of the Results Framework (% of subprojects activities of high technical meeting quality technical standards, and % of PRF built infrastructure in a functioning quality). The sampling and methodology of collect will be shared and agreed with the PRF team and World Bank team.

The satisfaction survey of beneficiaries' methodology will include: (i) desk review of PRF documentation and (ii) focus groups and interviews of project beneficiaries. It will include calculating the indicator from the (RF) (% of households in PRF beneficiary villages satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRF III). Beneficiaries' satisfaction results will also be analyzed per gender, age, ethnic groups and geographic location. The sampling and methodology of collect will be shared and agreed with the PRF team and World Bank team.

Documentation to be provided to consultants:

After signing the contract, the PRF Executive Director will share the following documents with the evaluator(s) for the evaluator's first desk review:

PRFIII AF (2020-2024)

- Project Appraisal Document AF.
- Project Annual reports.
- Mission Aide memoires
- Financial reports
- Mid-Term Review Report
- Project Implementation manuals (relevant ones and including safeguards documents).
- Beneficiary Assessment (March 2023)
- The Mid-Term Review Mission Report 2023
- PRFIII AF- Assessment of SHG and PGs 2023
- PRFIII AF- Nutrition Assessment 2023
- PRFIII Technical Assessment by Final Civil Engineer Student 2023
- Other related document and reports
- PRFIII Technical Assessment and Outcomes Survey 2022, funded by WB
- World Bank Economic Analysis of PRF3 and PRF3 AF, 2024.
- World Bank Nutrition Qualitative Assessment of PRF3 AF, 2024.
- World Bank, MIS Assessment of PRF3 AF, 2024.

- List of all PRF3 AF of villages infrastructures in the field specifying the type/status/exact geographic location.
- Infrastructures technical documents (from design to completion, etc.) of PRF3 AF of villages.
- Training materials used for the capacity building of various infrastructures committee.
- An open list of key people to interview.
- Questionnaires from last beneficiaries' satisfaction assessment.

PRF III (2017-2020)

- Project Appraisal Document.
- Project Annual reports.
- Mission Aide memoires
- Financial reports
- Mid-Term Review Report
- Project Implementation manuals (relevant ones and including safeguards documents).
- PRF Summary Report 2016-June 2022 for SDC.
- PRFIII Final External Evaluation 2022, funded by SDC
- Technical, Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability Audit in 2018
- Road Maintenance Groups (RMGs) Impact Evaluation 2019
- Community Force Account (CFA) Impact Evaluation 2019
- The Mid-Term Review Mission report 2018
- Other related document and Report.
- An open list of key people to interview.

4.2. Roles and responsibilities of the evaluator(s)

The evaluation will be conducted by a team composed of one International Team Leader, accompanied by 1 local engineer and 1 local social scientist experts/consultants. The overall responsibility will lie with the Team Leader. The international Team leader will have a contract with the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) and in the capacity of team leader, will sub-contract the local consultant(s). The International Team Leader will report to the PRF

The contact persons for the Evaluation Team are:

- For the overall PRFIII evaluation: the Evaluation team leader, which consists of PRF Management Team, led by the PRF Executive Director, and from representatives World Bank.
- Other logistics: ...[REDACTED], PRF [REDACTED]...

4.3. Evaluation process and timeframe

The following work plan provides suggested dates, responsibilities and resources needed for the various activities of the evaluation process. This work plan will eventually be adapted by the Evaluation Team Lead during the inception phase.

Activity	Date	Responsibilities
Kick-off meeting with evaluation team and Evaluation Team Lead	20 February 2024	PRF; Consultant/s
Interviews with stakeholders, partners, desk study	21– 26 February 2024	Consultant/s
Preparation of the Inception Report: evaluation objectives and questions, evaluation design, methodology	21-26 February 2024	Consultant/s
Draft Inception Report	29 February 2021	Consultant/s
Feedback on the Inception Report by the PRF Executive Director, PRF PMT and World Bank	04 March 2024	PRF/WB

Finalisation of the Inception Report (incorporation of PRF PMT and financing partners comments)	05-06 March 2024	Consultant/s
Final Inception Report	07 March 2024	Consultant/s
Logistical and administrative preparation for data collection, , field visits, etc.	08- 15 March 2024	Consultant/s; PRF
Field mission in selected 4 provinces, with data collection, interviews, evaluation workshops, etc.	17 – 31 March 2024	Consultant/s
Debriefing at PRF Head Office, Vientiane Capital	03 April 2024	Consultant/s
Data analysis and preparation of Draft Evaluation Report	04 – 22 April 2024	Consultant/s
Draft Evaluation Report	31 May 2024	Consultant/s
Debriefing/presentation at PRF Head Office, Vientiane Capital with the Evaluation Team Leader	26 April 2024	Consultant/s
Feedback on the Draft Evaluation Report provided by PRF Team and World Bank Team.	02 June 2024	PRF Team/World Bank
Final Evaluation Report	15 June 2024	Consultant/s
PRF Management Response	18 June 2024	Evaluation Team leader
Dissemination/Workshop of the Final Evaluation Report	20 June 2024	PRF Executive Director

Timeframe to be discussed with consultant(s), but the work will be undertaken over a timeline of approximately four months.

5. Deliverables

The proposed consultancy will have the following deliverables submitted for review by the PRF3 AND PRF3 AF Project team and World Bank:

- Inception Report
- Draft detailed table of content (with explanations of sections) of the evaluation report to be submitted before drafting of the evaluation report.
- Draft Evaluation Report
- Final Evaluation Report,
- PowerPoint for presentation of final main results during (workshop).
- List of completed infrastructures (PRF3 AF) with type and specific location selected for field review.
- Detailed methodologies, tools, checklist and questionnaires for field data collection developed for the technical audit of infrastructures, the assessment of the quality of construction/rehabilitation processes implemented and the evaluation of infrastructures functioning and benefits to beneficiaries.
- List of villages, districts and beneficiaries selected for interviews among PRF3 AF 2nd batch of villages.
- Tools, checklist and questionnaires and updated data collection plan for field data collection developed and tested for the evaluation of beneficiaries' satisfaction.

The report should be in English language, logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations and their correlations. All information that is not relevant to the overall analysis belongs in an annex. The report should respond in detail to the evaluation questions and key focus areas.

The main section of the evaluation report should not exceed 30 pages, including an executive summary (2-3 pages), but excluding the annexes. The report should contain clear references to important information/data available in the annexes.

Proposed structure of the evaluation report:

Cover page

Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

Acknowledgments

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Description of the [project/programme]
- Findings, incl. results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations and lessons learnt

Annexes (compulsory)

- Terms of reference
- Complete list of stakeholders and others consulted and interviewed
- Detailed description of the review process, including data sources and possible methodological weaknesses and limitations
- Analysis of the intervention logic (Results framework): extent to which objectives have been achieved
- Other deliverables that were requested in the ToR

6. Competency profile of the evaluator(s)

The evaluator(s) is/are expected to bring along the following evaluation and thematic expertise and experience.

The assignment will require an individual international consultant as Team Leader with the following qualifications:

- Master's degree (or higher) in project management, social sciences, livelihood, agriculture or a related field;
- At least 8 years' experience in conducting evaluations of donor projects in East Asia;
- Knowledge, expertise, and experience in conducting project evaluations in projects related to livelihood, agriculture, nutrition, community development, gender development, etc.
- Expertise and experiences in conducting data analysis for at least 6 years.
- Knowledge of gender and ethnic minorities in projects.
- Proven experience in working with Governments, multilateral or bilateral donor, preferably in East Asian in the area of social accountability, governance, public services, health, education, gender, community development, etc; and

Fluent in English in both writing and speaking including good report writing skills.

The assignment will also require an individual local engineer consultant with the following qualifications:

- At least 3 years of experience conducting technical audit of infrastructures of projects in rural areas.
- BA in Engineering.
- Ability to work in English.

The assignment will also require an individual local senior social expert consultant with the following qualifications:

- Gender and rural development expertise, with at least 3 years of experience conducting qualitative and quantitative evaluations of project beneficiaries in rural areas.
- Experience in community driven development, gender in livelihood activities, participatory rural appraisal and conducting qualitative evaluations.
- MA in social sciences, gender, etc.

- Ability to work in English.

7. Reporting

The evaluators will report to the PRF Executive Director and/or PRF Deputy Director, in Vientiane Capital for the entire duration of the assignment. Operational support will be provided by the PRF Head Divisions and the PRF Head of Units (PRF PMT) in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

8. Application procedure

Technical and financial have to be submitted to the Poverty Reduction Fund by email to [email address] or [email address] or by hand to the PRF Head Office in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, by [time] local time on [date].

The technical proposal should not exceed [amount of]6 pages and should outline the service provider's:

- I. Understanding of the assignment;
- II. Approach to and methodology for the assignment;
- III. Experience with similar assignments (incl. CVs);
- IV. Draft evaluation work plan;
- V. Draft report outline;
- VI. Financial proposals;
- VII. [Other].

The financial proposal should be no more than one page and should clearly outline the daily rates in United States Dollars (USD)

9. Contracting

The contract will be awarded by the PRF following an analysis of technical and financial proposals received in response to these terms of reference.