

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Position	National Nutrition Officer (Lao National only)
Number of Position	1
Location	Based in Vientiane Capital with regular visits to targeted provinces, districts, and villages
Supervisor	National Nutrition and Community Development Specialist
Close coordination with	District Nutrition Officers, Livelihood and M&E team
Duration	A one-year contract. Renewal subject to project organizational requirement, budget, and annual performance review

A. Background

Persistent high levels of child undernutrition present a major barrier to poverty reduction, as well as human and rural development in Lao PDR. Against a national average of 33 percent, stunting in children under five years is highest among ethnic minorities (43-50%) and in children from poor households (48%). Food insecurity remains a critical issue in Lao PDR; a situation which is currently exaggerated by food inflation due to the Lao currency depreciation, rising farm input costs and extreme weather events. The share of children aged 6-23 months meeting the minimum meal frequency dropped from 70 percent in March 2022 to 33 percent in March 2023, while the proportion meeting the minimum acceptable diet halved, declining from 18 percent to 9 percent.

To address the malnutrition challenge, the Government of Laos (GoL) has implemented various policies and programs, including a nutrition convergence agenda to accelerate the prevention and reduction in stunting, which involves the entire government, as well as private, academic, and community sectors from the central to the village level. In line with the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025) and under the guiding framework of the National Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025) and Action Plan (2021-2025), the GoL aims to reduce stunting to 25% by 2025 through a Multisectoral Nutrition Convergence Approach (MNCA).

The World Bank, through various sector-specific operations, is supporting activities that seek to address the immediate, underlying, and basic causes of childhood malnutrition. Under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry a new project has been launched, focusing on enhancing resilience by improving livelihood opportunities and nutritional outcomes. This new project is called “Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience (CLEAR)” Project. The nutrition component of this project (component 3) will focus on improving community level nutrition outcomes by building on lessons from the Poverty Reduction Fund III AF nutrition activities. The component will support improvements in the dietary intake (both in quality and quantity) of mothers and children in the 1,000-day window through the promotion of innovative nutrition practices. The nutrition component will finance two sub-components:

Promotion of demand for enhanced nutrition practices

The project will adopt an integrated social and behavioral change (SBC) approach to deliver activities targeting individuals, family and peer networks, and the whole community through three channels: (a) community mobilization, (b) interpersonal communication, and (c) mass communication. Women-led community nutrition groups will be established and trained in each community.

Promotion of community-sourced nutritious food

First, this subcomponent will support home nutrition gardening. Tested nutrient-dense, climate-resilient crops suitable for cultivation in areas with limited water and land access will be promoted for home consumption and group cooking. The activities will be rolled out in partnership with the Lao Farmer Network (LFN). Second, goat dairy production and use will be supported to provide a key ingredient for child feeding recipes.

The project will train goat farmers in raising, feeding and milking indigenous goats. The training will be conducted in partnership with Lao Buffalo Dairy, a social enterprise in Luang Prabang, and AgCoTech Laos.

B. Summary of Role

The National Nutrition Officer is responsible for developing field guidelines and tools to implement the CLEAR nutrition & SBC manual to be applied by District Nutrition Officers (DNOs), Nutrition Young Graduates (NYGs), Nutrition Community Facilitators (NCFs), Community Nutrition Groups (CNGs) members in target villages. S/he will then manage the implementation of nutrition related activities to be carried out by CNGs by hands-on demonstrations and supervising trainings by service providers/consultants on food processing, home nutrition gardening, goat dairy and social and behaviour change, in particular multimedia peer learning. For each district the tasks include supervisions of the DNOs, NYGs and NCFs including workplan and budget preparation, monitoring and reporting on nutrition activities and related financial management. While the Nutrition Officer will be responsible for the technical supervision of DNOs and NYGs, day-to-day management of DNOs and NYGs staff will be the responsibility of District Team Leader.

The Nutrition Officer will be required to produce documents in both English and Lao language.

C. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Design and implement trainings for DNOs and NYGs on the technical implementation of CLEAR nutrition activities together with Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Ministry of Health (MOH) staff following the steps laid out the CLEAR nutrition & SBC manual;
2. Prepare budget and workplans for CLEAR nutrition activities which are coordinated with District Health Office (DHO)/Health Centre (HC);
3. Review and finalize the CLEAR social behaviour change framework including messages for CNG activities;
4. Finalize the curriculum for CNG activities and coordinate with the Livelihood and Infrastructure teams;
5. Prepare an IEC plan including use of existing materials from other projects and design of new IEC as needed;
6. Train on food processing and review recipes for each geographical location by using time saving technology introduced under the Poverty Reduction Fund,
7. Support the procurement and production of necessary equipment (e.g. food processing and cooking equipment as well as tools for local video production);
8. Supervise the implementation of the CNG activities at village level following the nutrition & SBC manual and provide mentoring services to DNOs and NYGs as needed to assure quality of implementation;
9. Oversee the preparation of the nutrition chapters of monitoring reports, including file-based data entry and verification to assure quality and accuracy in the data collection, monitoring and implementation process and make recommendations on its improvement;
10. Report to the National Nutrition and Community Development Specialist and work in close collaboration with the Livelihood team, particularly in coordinating the field work of LYGs and NYGs;
11. Represent the project in meetings with development partners, MOH and other partners as regards to nutrition technical aspects, including coordination with the World Bank-financed Nutrition Convergence Projects;
12. Inform technical discussions on nutrition with the World Bank Nutrition Specialist during World Bank implementation and support mission as well as technical field visits;
13. Maintain excellent working relationship with authorities at all levels as well as with donors and other institutions involved in project activities;

14. Within scope of responsibility promote and explain project principles, processes and achievements to GoL representatives, donors, concerned parties and NGOs;
15. Accomplish others tasks as defined either by the National Nutrition and Community Development Specialist, according to the project needs.

D. Position Requirements

Qualifications and Experience

- At least a Bachelor's degree in health, nutrition, social sciences, rural development, agriculture, development studies, or other related fields;
- At least 5 years of experience implementing or supporting community nutrition activities in Lao PDR in large scale projects, with a strong focus on social behaviour change;
- Experience in agriculture-based nutrition activities, handicrafts, or other micro-enterprises (preferably with a focus on food processing); experience in project activity preparation, design, coordination support and institutional strengthening and monitoring impact; and experience in promoting gender equality and addressing gender stereotypes impacting nutrition outcomes;
- Experience in training project staff for nutrition and community development operations; in particular training of ethnic groups in mountainous and remote areas;
- Excellent computer skills including all MS Office Package, and financial management systems; and Good level of English skills (speaking, reading and report writing);

Personal Attributes

- Strong analytical skills for project activity design and for applying best practices and lessons learned;
- Good knowledge of the different stakeholders involved in rural development activities in Lao PDR (government and donor community).
- Good communication and social skills;
- Ability to work independently and within a team;
- Willingness to travel to and within the target districts and villages for extended periods;
- Women are encouraged to apply.