

## Terms of reference for consulting services

October/November 2022

**Mission:** Evaluate the implementation of the project: “Strengthening land rights of communities” (project N-LAO-2019-0254) by the Land Information Working Group. The evaluation is to give a realistic opinion, based on evidence, to the donors and other relevant stakeholders involved on performance and results achieved by the LIWG from the period 01.01.2020 to 30.09.2022. It will serve to design a next phase of the project.

### Background Information

The Land Information Working Group is a network of civil society organizations concerned about land issues in Laos. The LIWG supports open information sharing, and participatory and transparent decision-making processes related to land and natural resource use management. The LIWG operates under the umbrella of the iNGO Network (network of international NGOs in Laos) and nearly 40 different organizations, INGOs and NPAs, are represented in its Core Membership. The LIWG Secretariat was established in August 2011, and it currently employs five full time staff. In cooperation with the Chair Persons, who represent the member organizations, the Secretariat is responsible for the implementation of the LIWG strategy and work plan, as well as for the development of the Group. Helvetas-Laos acts as both the host and the managing organization of the LIWG funds.

The group was established so members could inform one another about land matters, especially in view of increasing land-related foreign direct investment (FDI) projects and concerns over the negative impacts on the livelihoods of rural communities, as well as to develop common initiatives to address some of these issues. The basis of LIWG work is cooperation with a wide variety of stakeholders: civil society, Government, Development Partners, private sector, and, importantly, the communities themselves. The LIWG promotes awareness and understanding of the social and environmental impacts of land-related projects, by gathering and disseminating information, and facilitating dialogue.

LIWG has a strategy which is based on 3 pillars:

1. **Connecting:** Build connections and trust, develop spaces and channels of communication, share knowledge for dialogue and engagement inland governance issues;
2. **Mobilizing:** Mainstream grassroots implementation of land rights through mobilization of members and other stakeholders;
3. **Engaging:** promote policy dialogue along multiple stakeholders to improve land tenure security.

The strategy describes the role of LIWG as a facilitator, connector and enabler, supporting the activities of its partners and members: *“The role of LIWG is to provide a networking and information hub by acting as a bridging organization and community of practice to create synergies across land tenure security-related activities of its members.”*

Thus, the core roles and responsibilities of the network itself are:

1. Strengthen expertise and capacity of members to implement land governance activities in the field;
2. Identify issues related to land governance;
3. Be a network where land issues are discussed and shared both passively and pro-actively;
4. Act as a bridge and connector between the various organizations including INGOs, NPAs/CSOs, private sector, Government, donors and research institutions;
5. Take action to influence policies relating to land and their implementation.

The current LIWG project “Strengthening land rights of communities” (project N-LAO-2019-0254) funded by Bread for the World and co-funded by MRLG and CARE has been running from January 2020 and will end in December 2022. The objectives of the project are defined in the “Agreed project objectives, indicators, target groups and activities” form. The period under review for the project evaluation is January 2020 until April 2022.

The external evaluation is funded by Bread for the World.

### **Main objectives and Key Questions**

The evaluation will provide an external view on how well the project was implemented and to what degree the objectives and indicators have been reached. It will also look at the relevance of the project to the Lao land context but also relevance to LIWG itself according to the LIWG strategy and the new directions taken by LIWG thanks to this project for a more effective impact in mainstreaming grassroots implementation of land rights through mobilization of members. It will also identify recommendations for a next phase.

The project “Strengthening land rights of communities” has for its general objective that Land tenure rights of rural communities are recognized and better protected. The general objective is defined by a two-fold objectives with their related indicators.

Objective 1: Rural communities are claiming their rights on land.

Indicator 1.1: Communities address their land issues by requesting legal advice from the land network at least 5 times until the end of the project.

This objective is implemented in partnership with the LIFE initiative which is a LIWG members’ initiative hosted by Village Focus International. The LIFE initiative was mainly in charge of LIWG members’ capacity building and outreach to the grassroots level.

This objective includes the development and dissemination of the LIWG legal calendar as well as training of trainers on land tenure rights issues and legal counselling coupled with coaching visits. In regards to the LIWG legal calendar, the project brings a new approach by strengthening the capacities of LIWG members in the use of the legal calendar for better impact at grassroots level.

Objective 2: The expertise of the Lao Civil Society Land Network on land is acknowledged by the Lao policy maker.

Indicators:

- 2.1. The National Assembly will ask the land network for proposals enhancing policies on land at least 2 times until the end of the project.
- 2.2. The National Assembly is discussing recommendations to recognize land tenure rights of local communities in the land and forestry laws, submitted by the Land Network.

This objective is related to the advocacy work of LIWG done together with its members and partners. At the time of the signature of the contract with the donor, the law was promulgated by the Prime Minister of Laos. Therefore, the advocacy work of LIWG had to be re-strategized to a wider audience than the National Assembly. The evaluation will have to consider this.

The following questions are to be addressed during the monitoring and appraisal of activities in a gender-sensitive way (to be defined by the consultant). The questions are organized per objective.

- **OBJECTIVE 1**

- Objective 1: Rural communities are claiming their rights on land.
- Indicator 1.1: Communities address their land issues by requesting legal advice from the land network at least 5 times until the end of the project.
- Questions to be addressed:

⇒ **RELEVANCE:**

- Legal calendar:

- Are the topics identified in the legal calendar related to the pressing land issues in Lao PDR and concerns of smallholder farmers?
  - Training of trainers and coaching visits on land tenure rights issues:
    - Were the topics of ToT delivered by the LIFE in accordance to the needs of communities and relevant to the land issues identified in the local context?
  - Are project interventions for achievement of objective 1 relevant?

⇒ **EFFECTIVENESS:**

- Legal calendar:
  - Are the capacity building efforts put in place by LIWG effective: Is the Training of Trainers and the booklet accompanying the legal calendar useful for the members? Is it user-friendly? Does it help to strengthen the understanding of the calendar and its use at grassroots level? Which improvements can be made in future editions?
  - Has this approach helped to increase the LIWG outreach at grassroots level?
- Training of trainers and coaching visits on land tenure rights issues:
  - Are communities better aware of their land tenure rights following the whole process of training of trainers and coaching visits delivered? Have communities' understanding of land tenure rights increased?
  - Is it effective to plan 3 coaching visits to the recipient organization after a Training of trainers?
  - Do communities understand how to claim their rights or get a legal advice? Were legal advices requested through the awareness raising and capacity building process provided and documented?
- To what degree has the approach taken by the project enabled the achievements planned for under objective 1 to be the most effective possible?

⇒ **EFFICIENCY**

- Are the activities identified to achieve the objective 1 of the project cost-effective? What are the main safeguards to ensure their economic viability and their impact overtime?

⇒ **SUSTAINABILITY**

- To what extent strengthening the capacities of LIWG members in the use of the legal calendar enhance the sustainability of the legal calendar?
- Will communities request legal advice from the land network after the end of the project?

● **OBJECTIVE 2**

- Objective 2: The expertise of the Lao Civil Society Land Network on land is acknowledged by the Lao policy maker.
- Indicators:
- 2.1. The National Assembly will ask the land network for proposals enhancing policies on land at least 2 times until the end of the project.
- 2.2. The National Assembly is discussing recommendations to recognize land tenure rights of local communities in the land and forestry laws, submitted by the land network.
- Questions to be addressed:

⇒ **RELEVANCE:**

- Has LIWG developed the right partnerships/collaboration with the relevant stakeholders in the land sector? Has LIWG used the right approach to mobilize its partners towards the next steps for advocacy work?
- Was LIWG able to adjust its advocacy work according to the evolution of the land policy context?
- Is the advocacy strategy well designed and clear to address the pressing land issues in Laos? How is this strategy implemented so far?
- Has LIWG and its advocacy partners developed the relevant advocacy materials to conduct its advocacy work? How much were LIWG and its advocacy partners able to utilize them?

⇒ **EFFECTIVENESS:**

- Is the National Assembly well informed about LIWG advocacy work? Has the National Assembly requested proposals enhancing policies on land already? Are the recommendations provided by the network being discussed?
  - Is the Department of Land at MoNRE well informed about LIWG and its partners' advocacy work and recommendations on policy? Are the recommendations provided by the group being discussed?
  - Are LIWG members well aware about the land policy context and the new land and forestry laws? Were the events (training, workshops etc...) proposed done in accordance to the context and the needs of the LIWG members?
  - How much of the communication about land issues and policy changes been made available to the members but also to the wider stakeholders in the land sector?
- ⇒ **EFFICIENT:**
- Are the activities identified to achieve the objective 1 of the project cost-effective? What are the main safeguards to ensure their economic viability and their impact overtime?
- ⇒ **SUSTAINABILITY:**
- To what extent the advocacy work conducted by LIWG can still be used a reference beyond the project's timeframe?
  - Will the National Assembly consult the land network beyond the project's timeframe?
- ⇒ **IMPACT:**
- Will the project/programme contribute to the attainment of overall development goals?
  - Are there any unplanned/unexpected positive and negative changes have occurred?
- Recommendations for the project's adjustment:
    - What would be the recommendations for key changes to be made until the end of the current project (December 2022) and also recommendations for the next phase of the project?
  - Aside question for LIWG based on observation:
    - Which recommendations can be made to LIWG to combine, as best as possible, grassroots impact and policy work while respecting the LIWG role and strategy?

## Evaluation Framework and Methodology

**Duration:** The mission is estimated to represent 17 full work days planned in October/November 2022. A first draft of the report will be submitted on the 18<sup>th</sup> November. A final version will be submitted 5 days after having received the steering committee's comments.

**Location:** Preparatory meetings with the LIWG Secretariat and Chairs will be held in Vientiane Capital. Most interviews with project stakeholders will also be held in Vientiane Capital and in provinces.

### **Methods:**

Interventions to be evaluated are listed in the "Agreed project objectives, indicators, target groups and activities" form. In particular, the progress on the objectives as stated in the document are to be considered. The main sources of information for the evaluator will be the written materials on land issues in Laos, developed by the LIWG and its partners, as well as interviews to be conducted with LIWG counterparts and stakeholders (individual/group discussions), LIWG website and FB page. The list of interviewees may include but is not limited to the following agencies:

- LIWG members who received a training on the legal calendar;
- LIWG members who received a Training of Trainers on land tenure rights issues;
- LIWG Steering Committee Members;
- Other relevant LIWG Core Members;

- Governmental stakeholders: Department of Land at MoNRE
- National Assembly;
- Advisory Group members;
- Other partners and stakeholders where relevant

A detailed framework, methodology and the list of agencies to interview is to be developed by the project evaluator at the time of the application. This will be refined in cooperation with the LIWG Secretariat and Chairs. The data should be collected and analyzed, disaggregated by gender, ensuring that men *and* women are involved in the evaluation.

Output/deliverable	Time required (estimated)	Deadline
Preparatory work: Introductory discussions with the LIWG Secretariat and Chairs, review of documents, developing a plan for interviews, finalizing the plans together with the LIWG Secretariat and Chairs.	3 days	13th October
Conducting interviews	10 days	31st October
Presentation of the first draft evaluation report to the LIWG steering committee members and submission of a first draft report	3 days	11th November
Finalize the final evaluation report	1 day	25th November

### Evaluation Team

One Consultant will be assigned to carry out the mission. However, he/she can form a team. A gender balance should be respected where possible but priority is placed on the evaluator having sufficient knowledge and experience of the issues and of the working context of the LIWG and its membership. Strong analytical and strategy development skills are required.

### Evaluation Report and Any Other Products

The responsibility for the contents of the final evaluation report lies with the evaluator. The evaluation report will address the following aspects:

- Give a realistic opinion of the performance and results of the LIWG;
- Estimate whether or the degree to which the objectives of the project have been achieved;
- From the observations, provide recommendations to support the future design of LIWG activities, and decision-making over the strategic direction of the group.

Key questions to be answered are outlined in the Section *Main objectives and Key Questions*.

**Outline of the Evaluation Report:** The report should not exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes). The report should contain the different elements mentioned below. All parts should be clearly distinguished from each other and be of sufficient quality.

- Cover page
- Table of Contents
- An executive summary that can be used as a document in its own right. It should include the major findings of the evaluation and summarise conclusions and recommendations.
- The objectives of the evaluation
- The main questions and derived sub-questions.
- A justification of the methods and techniques used (including relevant underlying values and assumptions, theories) with a justification of the selections made (of persons interviewed, agencies or sites visited).
- Eventual limitations of the evaluation.
- A presentation of the findings and the analysis thereof (including unexpected, but relevant findings). All research questions should be addressed, paying attention to gender issues.
- Conclusions, which will analyse the various questions. Conclusions should be derived from the findings and the analysis thereof.
- Recommendations should be clearly related to conclusions but presented separately. Recommendations should be practical and if necessary, divided up for various actors or stakeholders.
- Report annexes that include:
  - Terms of Reference;
  - The technique used for data collection (including the people interviewed and locations visited; the list of questions used or 'interview guide' or topic list (also for possible group discussions);
  - The project adhered to (data and main features of the activities carried out).
  - Concepts and list of abbreviations.
  - List of documents and bibliography.

The reporting style should be clear and accessible. References to sources used, such as interviews, literature, reports, must be given.

Background documents (list non-exhaustive):

- Concept note on the project "Strengthening land rights of communities"
- "Agreed project objectives, indicators, target groups and activities" form
- Project progress reports (6-months);
- LIWG advocacy strategy;
- IEC and advocacy materials developed by the LIWG and its partners;
- LIWG Facebook page, website and E-newsletter;
- Evaluation of the activity of the Land Information Working Group (LIWG) (2013, 2015,2018)
- Evaluation on the LIWG Calendar (2020)
- Other relevant documents

## **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND BUDGET**

If you are interested in carrying out this evaluation, please send a Curriculum Vitae and a tender including the following elements:

1. Evaluation technical proposal (3 pages maximum) including the methodology proposed to comply with the requirements of the evaluation.
2. Detailed calendar of the evaluation (based on the work plan included in the workplan).

3. Full budget presenting the costs for the evaluation including transport, accommodation, taxes etc. The budget presented should not exceed 13,000 USD.

4. The Curriculum Vitae and the Tender have to be sent by email by the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at the latest to the following address: [asc@laolandinfo.org](mailto:asc@laolandinfo.org)