

Terms of Reference

(June 16, 2014)

Title:	Safeguard Officer (SO)
Contracting Authority:	Environment Protection Fund Office (EPF)
Location:	Vientiane
Duration:	3 years renewable annually and with possible extension

Background

1. The Environment Protection Fund (EPF) is a financially autonomous institution under the Government Office. It was established in 2005 to strengthen environmental protection, sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity management and community development in Lao PDR. It manages an endowment provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and voluntary contributions from hydropower and mining companies. In addition, the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) received financing from the World Bank which it has entrusted EPF to implement through its standard sub-project mechanism in three of its five financing windows (Community and Biodiversity Investment (CBI), Policy Implementation and Capacity Enhancement (PICE) and Water Resource Management (WRM). The EPF responds to a Board, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and co-chaired by the Minister of Finance and is managed by a secretariat, the EPF Office (EPFO). A Technical Committee (TC) has been appointed to assist with sub-project review, approval and supervision.

EPF Operations

2. The EPF operates a sub-project mechanism dispatched through five thematic windows. The administration of the sub-projects is guided by various instruments covering sub-project operations, monitoring and evaluation, financial management and procurement. The EPFO is led by an Executive Director (ED) and a deputy. Four management units are proposed to be established with support from LENS2: Operations, Finance, Procurement and Administration. The new Operations Unit will include the following technical positions: a safeguard officer, M&E officers, three subproject coordinators/facilitators assisting with development and supervision of sub-projects at central and provincial level and a fundraising/communication officer. At the same time, the EPFO is launching a change-management process to optimize its organization and staffing in order to be able to handle a large portfolio of sub-projects more efficiently.

Objective of the assignment

3. The objective of the assignment is to develop and ensure effective planning, management, and monitoring of mandatory environment and social safeguards for EPF sub-projects, especially those funded by LENS2, during their preparation, implementation, and completion stages.

Scope of the assignment

4. The Safeguard Officer (SO) will be responsible for the planning, management, and monitoring of all safeguard requirements for the LENS2 project and sub-projects in line with the Project Implementation Plan (PIM) and the legal WB documents. The SO will provide technical inputs related to environment and social safeguard and assist the Subproject Delivery Agency (SDA), especially the provinces, during the identification of safeguard issue and preparation of safeguard documents (screening form, ESMP, monitoring form, etc.) in line with the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the Community Engagement Framework (CEF) that have been established for LENS2. The SO will work with the LENS2 project team, the SDAs, and the WB to ensure full compliance with the ESMF and CEF including undertaking supervision, monitoring, and reporting of all safeguard requirements. The SO responsibility includes, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) *Safeguard screening for the subprojects:* The ESMF and CEF require the SDAs to be responsible for safeguard screening, and identifying issues and mitigation measures for all subprojects to be financed under LENS2. The SO will take the lead on behalf of EPFO to assist the SDAs during subproject preparation in identifying of safeguard issues and

mitigation actions as required under the ESMF and CEF, and prepare mandatory documents (safeguards instrument) for EPFO manager to sign and/or endorse. When in doubt, the SO will seek clarification from WB safeguard specialists (environment and/or social) and/or the SDA to ensure clarity on the issues and actions including keep proper records of safeguard related matters for EPF.

- (2) *Safeguard documents preparation:* The ESMF and CEF require the SDA to be responsible for preparation of safeguard documents agreed during the safeguard screening process. The SO will take the lead on behalf of EPFO to assist the SDA during the subproject preparation to prepare safeguard documents and/or necessary measures defined in the ESMF and CEF, and prepare necessary documents for EPFO manager to sign and/or endorse. The SO will ensure timely preparation of safeguard documents necessary for EPFO to secure approval of the subprojects from the Technical Committee (TC), the WB, and the EPF Board of Director (BOD). When in doubt, the SO will seek clarification from WB safeguard specialists (environment and/or social) and/or the SDA to ensure timely safeguard documents development and clearance. The SO will also be responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguard requirements/documents are incorporated into the sub-grant agreement/contract, and all the records are properly kept in project file.
- (3) *Safeguard supervision and monitoring:* The ESMF and CEF require that EPFO is responsible for supervision and monitoring of safeguard performance including preparation of safeguard report to the WB, and ensuring effective safeguard consultation, disclosure, and grievance mechanism. Under the policy guidance of EPF manager, the SO will take the lead and advice SDAs in implementing safeguard requirements, and preparing various reports for EPFO manager to sign and/or endorse. During the subproject implementation, the SO will provide technical guidance to SDAs, EPFO managers, and Technical Committee on issues related to environmental and social impact, and required actions to ensure the compliance with safeguard requirements. It is anticipated that during subprojects implementation, technical advisors and/or safeguard specialists will be mobilized by EPFO periodically to ensure the safeguard documents are timely implemented and fully compliance. The SO will assist the advisors/specialists in coordination with the SDAs and other related agencies to facilitate effective operation of advisors/specialists. The SO will also be responsible for preparation of safeguard monitoring reports to EPFO manager and the WB, and update the safeguard related documents and/or manuals as agreed with WB.
- (4) *Safeguard training and coordination:* To facilitate effective implementation of ESMF and CEF, the SO will take the lead in planning and training to be conducted periodically for SDAs. Special attention will be given to the SDA involving local communities to ensure the CEF process is fully applied, and pay adequate attention to include gender and ethnic group aspects into the planning and implementation process. In accordance with the CEF Manual¹, the SO will ensure that the SDAs establish and maintain proper recording system for safeguard activities and issues addressed ready for EPFO and/or the WB review. The WB will carry out periodically review of safeguards compliance as required under LENS2. The SO will also be a focal point for all safeguard related aspects, particularly, participating in the WB implementation support missions.
- (5) *EPFO mission:* Contribute to the EPFO overall mission as a member of the operation team. Be actively involved in the overall LENS2 activities implementation, including, planning, management, supervision, and reporting of subprojects. The SO will also perform other tasks within reasonable scope deemed appropriate and requested by the EPF managers to enhance effectiveness EPF services.

¹ The CEF Manual will be prepared during the implementation of LENS2 with assistance from specialist and/or CEF training team to be established at EPF.

General principles

6. All EPF staff are expected to observe at all times the highest standard of professional ethics and integrity, promote results-oriented approach in the area of his/her responsibility and accountability and report irregularities to their supervisors.

Reporting

8. The SO will work under the supervision and guidance of, and report to the EPFO Head of operations.

Duration

9. This assignment is a 3-year contract renewable based on an annual performance evaluation. The assignment will start with a 3 month probation period.

Experience and qualifications

10. As SO Officer, the EPFO is looking for an experience safeguard specialist who can deliver complex safeguard requirements according to the ESMF and CEF of LENS2 project involving around 50-60 substantial sub-projects (spanning several sectors at national and provincial levels. Candidates should demonstrate skills and core competencies to deliver and attain results expected above, along with ability in interpersonal relations and strong communication skills, and in working effectively with a wide range of constituencies in a diverse working environment. It is also expected that he/she should be adequately experienced in and comfortable working with public institutions similar to those in project document context.

11. Key Academic and Professional Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or higher preferably in areas related to environment or social sciences, forestry, public administration or other relevant degree.
- A minimum of 8 4 years of relevant working experience related to environment and/or social safeguards of investment projects/activities preferably on issues related to sustainable use of natural resources in conservation/protection areas and watershed, and/or water resources and environmental management at local level is preferred.
- For a candidate with Master or higher degree with reasonable experience on safeguards and local issues related to natural resources, the minimum year of experience could be lower but not less than 3 2 years.
- An understanding of safeguards, operational, and procedural issues of WB and ADB supported projects would be a strong advantage.
- Reasonable level of English speaking and writing.

Others

- Strong commitment and interpersonal skills and willingness to work as part of a team.
 - Demonstrated interest for environment conservation and social development.
 - Willing to travel and spend time in provinces;
 - Regional candidate are encouraged to apply;
 - Women, are strongly encouraged to apply;
- Only short listed candidates will be contacted for confirmation or called for an interview.

Source of information

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