

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Implementation of Governance, Forest Landscapes and Livelihoods (I-GFLL) project**

Title:	Finance Officer for <b>I-GFLL project</b>
Contracting Authority:	Environment Protection Fund (EPF)
Location:	EPF Office in Vientiane
Duration:	12 months with renewable (subject to satisfactory performance and business needs)

### **Background**

1. The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) was established in 2005<sup>1</sup> with an aim to strengthen environmental protection, sustainable natural resources management, biodiversity conservation and community development in Lao PDR. EPF funding support is provided through the following financing windows: Policy Implementation and Capacity Enhancement (PICE), Biodiversity and Community Development (CBD), Water Resources Management (WRM), Pollution Control (PC), Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Climate Change (CC). EPF beneficiaries can be individual, commercial entities, government organizations or civil society entities. Funding supports include non-refundable grants, preferential loans, interest rate subsidies, or a combination of these. EPF funding sources includes benefits from EPF endowment, contributions from investment projects, and funding supports from international organizations. EPF Office (EPFO) is responsible for day-to-day operations under policy guidance of EPF Board.

### **EPF Operations**

2. The EPF operates a sub-project mechanism dispatched through six 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. Currently the EPF is implementing the GIZ GCF Project (FP117) ‘Implementation of the Lao PDR Emission Reductions Programme through improved governance and sustainable forest landscape management’ funded by BMZ and GCF. The GIZ and Government of Lao PDR represented by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) had signed the Grant Agreement for the project ‘Implementation of Governance, Forest landscapes and Livelihood (I-GFLL) which EPF as National Executing Entity has the mandate to manage the fund under EPF Climate Change Funding Window (REDD+ Funding Window in FP117) and channeling fund to targeted beneficiaries in three provinces (Sayaboury, Luang Prabang and Houaphan)..

### **Objective of the assignment**

3. The main objective of the assignment is to assist the EPF Managers and the Financial Unit Head to manage the financial and accounting aspects of I-GFLL Project.

### **Scope of the assignment**

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<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister Decree No 146/PM established EPF as a financially autonomous organization. However, per the revised EPF decree in 2017, EPF office is considered part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE).

4. He/she will be responsible for the proper implementation of the Financial Management sections of the Project Implementation Manual under the I-GFL project. He/She will, under the overall guidance of the FM Head and GIZ Senior financial manager and with assistance of the other FM officers and accountants, be responsible for tasks identified below.

- In close collaboration with the Financial Management Unit Head, establish, implement, and maintain the project financial management policies, systems and procedures in accordance with the rules and regulations of Government of Lao (GOL) and the grant agreement with the GIZ;
- Follow the EPF Project Financial Management Manual and GIZ finance guideline in line with the Project Implementation Manual and/or in agreement with the GIZ;
- Manage the financial aspects of the Project in accordance with the EPF Financial Management Manual and issues appropriations advise to the EPF Directors and/or the Financial Unit Head in support to the financial requirements for the implementation of the Project;
- Assist the FM Head to compile annual budget which includes the accuracy of budget financial projection and cash flow forecast for all components under I-GFL project;
- Ensure that all accounting transactions are properly authorized, supported by proper documentation and completed in accordance with the agreed procedure and recorded in the system in a timely manner.
- Assist the FM Head to supervise the work of all finance staff working for the Project at central and provincial levels/sub grants. Assist in providing training to all project owners (POs) financial staff and ensure that the financial system, policies and procedures are compiled and adhered to.
- Prepare withdrawal for documentation and replenishment of the project owners (POs) and sub- grant accounts. Ensure liquidity at all time.
- In close coordination with procurement and other matters related to administration and finance, handle overall Project administration, budget, special accounts, and other matters related to administration and finance, including preparation of TORs of the Project auditors, both for project preparation funds and for project implementation funds;
- Monitor cash advance and Assist the EPF team in regards to Financial Management aspects to facilitate effective implementation of the Project activities;
- Ensure that all project assets are maintained and update regularly. Ensure that physical verification of assets take place as appropriate.
- Prepares financial plan and monitoring tools of the Projects to ensure that the disbursement and management of funds are made in accordance with the Financial Management Manual of the Project including timely management of Project budget and withdrawal of fund;
- Prepares the Interim Financial Reports for timely submission as required by the Project and/or the GIZ;

- In coordination with Project management team and procurement specialist, produce within agreed timeframes, in format and substance acceptable to the GIZ, the Interim Unaudited Financial Report (IFR) on a quarterly basis for submission to the GIZ;
- Present the status of the Project finances and accounts in the review meetings;
- Prepare Project Financial Statement and work closely with internal and external auditors. In consultation with EPF managers and the Project Financial Management Head, and relevant financial unit, prepare action plan and monitor the implementation of auditors' audit recommendations;
- Coordinate with, and seek advice from, Ministry of Finance (MOF), GIZ and other GOL agencies in overall financial management and disbursement issues;
- Provides supervision/assistance in the financial aspect of Sub-Project operations and fund management. Provide funding priority to the Sub- Projects based on approved guidelines and priorities;
- Monitor Financial Performance of Sub-Projects including assuring the quality of withdrawal applications by ensuring that there is sufficient supporting documentation and the expenditure being paid for are in line with the sub grant agreement, including providing training to them;
- Contribute to the organization of the Annual Stakeholder Meeting.
- Provide on-the-job-training to subproject accountants from central agencies and provinces as assigned by the Project Financial Management Head and/or EPF managers;
- Undertake other related duties in Financial Management as may be assigned by the EPF managers and/or Project Financial Management Head.
- Performs other tasks within reasonable scope deemed appropriate and requested by the Executive Director.

### **General principles**

5. 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**

6. The Financial Officer will report directly to the Project Financial Unit Head and the EPF manager as assigned.

### **Duration**

7. This assignment is a 3-year term. The contract is renewable annually based on satisfactory performance evaluation and business needs. The assignment will start with a 3-month probation period.

## **Experience and qualifications**

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8. Candidates should demonstrate skills and core competencies to deliver and attain results expected above, along with ability in interpersonal relation and communication, and in working effectively with a wide range of constituencies in a diverse working environment. It is also expected he/she should be adequately experienced in and comfortable working with public institutions similar to those in project document context.

- At least a Bachelor degree in related field such as Finance, Accounting. Post Graduate qualification in finance and accounting or hold a professional qualification in finance and accounting are highly desirable;
- At least five years' experience in a similar position in donor funded projects
- Familiarity with the GOL and treasury payment systems;
- Proficiency in computerized accounting (experience with a projects accounting package will be an advantage);
- Good proficiency in written and spoken communication in Laos and English;
- Advanced computer skills in Word, Excel, etc.;
- Excellent analytical and presentation skills as demonstrated by sample report to be submitted at the interview;

## **Other**

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- Solid interpersonal skills and willingness to work as part of a team;
- Willing to travel and spend time in provinces;
- Women, are strongly encouraged to apply;
- Only short listed candidates will be called for an interview.

## **Source of information**

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