

Terms of Reference
(Refer to draft 16 June 2014)

Title:	Financial Management Officer (Financial Management Consultant)
Contracting Authority:	Environment Protection Fund (EPF)
Location:	EPF Office in Vientiane with trips to other Project Provinces
Duration:	12 months renewable (subject to satisfactory performance and business needs)

Background

1. The Environment Protection Fund (EPF) is a government fund 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 two of its five financing windows (Community and Biodiversity Investment (CBI) and Policy Implementation and Capacity Enhancement (PICE). The EPF responds to a Board, chaired by the Minister of MONRE 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

4. 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 LENS2.

Scope of the assignment

5. He/she will be responsible for the proper implementation of the Financial Management sections of the Project Implementation Manual under the LENS2. He/She will, under the overall guidance of the FM Head (Senior FM consultant) 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 legal agreement with the World Bank (the Bank);
- Update the Project Financial Management Manual in line with the Project Implementation Manual and/or in agreement with the World Bank;
- Manage the financial aspects of the Project in accordance with the 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 LEnS2
- 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 finance staff and ensure that the financial system, policies and procedures are complied and adhered to.
- Prepare withdrawal for documentation and replenishment of the DA 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;
- Assist the EPF team in regards to Financial Management aspects to facilitate effective implementation of the Project activities;
- Monitor cash advance and contract management regularly.
- 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 World Bank;
- In coordination with Project management team and procurement specialist, produce within agreed timeframes, in format and substance acceptable to the World Bank, the Interim Unaudited Financial Report (IFR) on a quarterly basis for submission to the World Bank;
- 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), the World Bank 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 subgrant agreement, including providing training to them;
- Contribute to the organization of the Annual Stakeholder Meeting.
- Performs other tasks within reasonable scope deemed appropriate and requested by the Executive Director.
- 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.

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

Duration

9. 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

10. 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 (experience with the World Bank financed projects will be an advantage);
- 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

- 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

*Environment Protection Fund,
2nd floor, MoNRE Building, Sidamdouan Road, POBox: 7647, Vientiane
Tel: (856-21)252739; Fax: (856-21)252741;
Website: <http://www.laoepf.org.la>*