



Terms of Reference

FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

of the project

**IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE FOR POOR RURAL FAMILIES IN PHU YEN
DISTRICT (SON LA)**

Location : Phu Yen district, Son La Province.

Application Deadline: 1st December 2015

Type of Contract : External Evaluation

Starting Date : 15th of December 2015

Estimated duration of Contract : 4 Weeks

I. BACKGROUND	3
II. PROJECT BACKGROUND	3
III. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION	4
IV. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE EVALUATION	4
V. METHODOLOGY	7
VI. WORKING PLAN	7
VII. DELIVERABLES	9
VIII. COORDINATION	9
IX. DURATION OF CONTRACT	9
X. PLACE OF EXECUTION OF WORK	9
XI. TYPE OF CONTRACT	9
XII. PROFILE, COMPETENCIES, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE	9
XIII. CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND PUBLICATION	10
XIV. COST AND TERMS OF PAYMENTS	10
XV. CONFIDENTIALITY	11

I. BACKGROUND

CONEMUND is an independent non-governmental organization that was born in 1997 in Spain with the aim of promoting international cooperation for the economic and social development of developing countries. Nowadays our effort is focused on supporting the development of low – income countries of Africa and Asia. At the present time, all our efforts are focused on the following areas:

- Giving response to the basic needs of the communities, especially concerning literacy, basic education and the protection of children.
- Increasing the economic capacity of poor households (especially women and young people), through training programs and labor insertion.
- Strengthening our institutional structure, providing a special attention to the training of those persons working in the local organizations we collaborate with.

In August 2014, CONEMUND started the implementation of the project: “Improving living conditions through sustainable agriculture for poor rural families in Phu Yen District (Son La)”. Within the project, CONEMUND has the intention of carrying out a Mid-term evaluation. Thus, CONEMUND will contract a consultant team to carry out the evaluation with the objective and the tasks as below.

The consultant will work under the overall guidance of the Country Representative of CONEMUND based in Hanoi, Vietnam and with the collaboration of CONEMUND staff in Phu Yen district.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Specific objective: To improve income and living conditions of poor families in 5 villages of Muong Thai commune (Phu Yen District), through sustainable agriculture and hygiene habits improvement to better ensure food security. The expected results of this project are the following:

Result 1. Project partner at Village level has increased capacity in supporting poor villagers and facilitating own development interventions successfully.

Result 2. Improved access to irrigation and water management for enhancing agricultural production in 5 villages, in Muong Thai commune.

Result 3. Improved agricultural production system in project area for increasing productivity (rice and corn) and food quality with low environmental impact.

Result 4. Improved animal husbandry and access to veterinary services with low environmental impact.

Direct beneficiaries

1.787 villagers (338 households) in 5 villages in Muong Thai commune (100% of them are ethnic minority people).

Period execution: August 2014 – February 2017 (30 months)

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

- To review the project's implementation progress against the approved activity plan.
- To assess achievements against the indicators and anticipated results set down in the logical framework, judging the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in terms of reaching or moving successfully towards the objectives established.
- To assess the extent to which the current applied approaches are appropriate to ensure achievement of the project objectives.
- To value if the initial design of the intervention is appropriate and suitable for the target population.
- To assess the suitability of the implementation of the project and the mechanisms adopted.
- To identify if any additional kinds of support are needed or requested by stakeholders for the remaining time of the project.
- To identify potential/existing weaknesses and propose measures and recommendations to overcome the deficiencies observed.

IV. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE EVALUATION

The evaluation **shall address the following aspects:**

Relevance

The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. In evaluating the relevance of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- Is the project in line with the current priorities of the recipient country?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
- To what extent the project training activities are relevant to the needs/values/beliefs of the targeted communities?
- To what extent have the activities performed within the project framework met the needs of the target population?
- To what extent the communication materials and training methodology provided are suitable the targeted audience?

Effectiveness

A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Implementation performance: Effectiveness and efficiency of project management and supervision of project activities.
- Is the project approach to validating and demonstrating Good Agricultural Practices effective? Will the models introduced in the project serve as reference methods and contribute to improve the productivity of the beneficiaries of the project?
- To what extent the staff's capacities and skills were adequate to carry out their task properly and how these have improved along implementation?
- How effective have the project's management, monitoring and financial systems been? What have been the most effective methodologies and approaches of the organization used?

Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Has the project done appropriate financial planning and reporting? Has there been diligence in the management of funds and reporting?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?
- What were the reasons of delays in the implementation of the project and its components? What are the consequences? Have efforts been made to overcome these constraints?
- Delivered outputs: Assessment of the project's success in producing each of the programmed outputs to date, in quantity and quality.
- How are resources being used in a wise and efficient manner and in the best interests of the beneficiaries? What are the ways in which resources could be better used?
- To what extent are human resources appropriate, adequately provisioned and operating effectively?

Impact

The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

When evaluating the impact of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

- Project outcomes and impact: Evaluation of the project's success so far in achieving its outcomes.

Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. Relations between different **stakeholders** (households, local authorities, local partners, etc.) and their level of implication will also be studied.

When evaluating the sustainability of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Sustainability: Analysis of the risks that are likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes in the short, medium and long term.
- Has the project involved the relevant stakeholders through consultation or information-sharing during its preparation?
- Are the stakeholders adequately involved in the development and implementation of project activities, particularly at the local demonstration site level?
- To what extent has the project been accepted by beneficiaries and partners?
- What is the likelihood of any benefits derived from the project being maintained?

Complementary criteria:

- Appropriation.
- Alignment.
- Participation
- Institutional capacity.

Crosscutting factors:

- Inclusiveness approach (Gender in development, vulnerability).

Did the project results include activities concerning women? Does the project affect positively to women's groups?; Did it improve the empowerment of women related to the decision-making in the intervention areas?

- Socio-cultural factors (ethnicity, location, access, and idiosyncrasy).
- Economic and financial factors.
- Environmental factors.

The evaluation timeframe covers the first half of the implementation of the project, from its starting date, on the 1st of August, 2014 to the 31st of October, 2015.

V. METHODOLOGY

The techniques for data collection and analysis will be designed by the evaluation team and must take into account all the needs of the stakeholders. The report must mention the collected data, arguing their validity and appropriateness to the context.

The quality of the methods, the rigor of the statistics, the techniques and the samples must be guaranteed.

The evaluating team will outline data collection tools and its analysis and it should take on board all the demands of the actions. The Report should make reference to the collected data, proving its adequateness in the context.

The following techniques could be used:

- **Qualitative** (focus group, discursive analysis, life stories, in-depth interviews,) when the questions require an in-depth analysis and to stimulate the participation of every beneficiary group in all the evaluation process.
- **Quantitative** (data analysis, questionnaires to measure) to be able to give an answer to those questions that require measurement.

The statistics' rigorousness will be taken into account, also the implementation of protocols and technical assessment for the course of action to be taken in the remaining part of the Program.

At the same time, data and the available information in the monitoring system of the local partners (database with quantitative data) will be taken in consideration, in order to avoid the duplication during the survey of primary data by the evaluation team, however its reliability should be a main task during the evaluation process.

VI. WORKING PLAN

In coordination with CONEMUND team and other stakeholders, the evaluation team will be responsible to provide the services as in the followings:

A) **Desk review** (estimated length of 1 week)

During this phase the team will proceed to:

- Revise the available documents related to the design, functioning and management of the Project and other information sources including, among others, formulation documents, working plans and monitoring reports, baseline study, previous studies about the identification and formulation of the Project, etc.
- Design the methodological tools in order to collect, process and analyse information.
- Identify local key informants, which include: PMB from CONEMUND staff, Village Development Committees members at village level, members of Farmer Interest Groups, villagers in the 5

selected villages, Muong Thai commune local authorities' representatives.

In addition, the evaluation team will select other informants who may be considered relevant, such as cooperation agencies in the intervention area, associations, sector networks, regional institutions, etc.

- **Draft and submission of the evaluation design document**. Prior to carrying out any fieldwork, the consultant will present the working plan, including the selected methodology, in order for it to be reviewed and for suggestions to be made by CONEMUND. CONEMUND's Country Representative must approve the evaluation working plan and methodology to be followed during the evaluation.

B) **Fieldwork** (estimated length 1 week)

Field visits will be designed, facilitated and documented by the evaluation team. CONEMUND and its local partners may accompany the evaluation team if agreed.

As part of the fieldwork, at least one meeting/visit per intervention area (1 district, 1 commune and 5 villages) must be planned.

Interviews with key informants will be carried out, as well as additional information requests to national and local institutions.

During all the process to gather relevant information, the evaluation team must follow a participatory and practical approach.

Meetings to present preliminary results must be planned and held with involved organisms, including local partners, local authorities and beneficiaries.

Data collection and analysis techniques will be designed by the evaluation team, who must constantly keep its independence and impartiality.

C) **Final Evaluation Report** (estimated length of 1 week)

A draft of the final report will be submitted in a maximum of **one week** after the finalization of the fieldwork. This draft will be presented to CONEMUND, who may provide comments/suggestions to be included in the final report.

In case of receiving comments/suggestions from CONEMUND, the final version of the evaluation report will be developed within one week time. Main findings will be shared with all the stakeholders (via email when it has been presented and validated by CONEMUND).

The report will be written in English. Translation to Vietnamese and its final presentation to any institution involved, as well as its dissemination among partners, right holders, duty bearers and moral bearers, will be CONEMUND's responsibility.

In order to achieve the objectives of the evaluation, the consultant(s) will work with the project staff of CONEMUND in Hanoi and travel to project sites to work with field base staffs, project partners and beneficiaries in 5 villages of Muong Thai commune to collect necessary information and data; and finally, provide a report in English covering all issues mentioned in this ToR.

VII. DELIVERABLES

The deliverables consists of the following products and services:

- 1) **Draft and submission of the inception report.** Prior to carrying out any fieldwork, the consultation team will present the working plan, including the chosen methodology, in order to be reviewed by CONEMUND (within 1 week from the beginning of the desk review).
- 2) **A draft of the final report** (within 4 weeks from the beginning of the desk review). This draft will be presented to CONEMUND, who may provide comments/suggestions to be included in the final report.
- 3) **A final version of the evaluation report.** The report will be written in English (within 6 weeks from the beginning of the desk review). The report shall include: Purpose of the evaluation and the methodology; the main findings regarding the project's implementation (project relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact of the project activities, sustainability of the project); lessons learned (assessment of attainment of indicators, operational and developmental lessons); conclusions and recommendations to CONEMUND and annexes (TOR, Itinerary and working plan, list of interviews, list of documents reviews, pictures, etc.).

The failure to complete any of these tasks involves the termination of the contract and of the payment obligations of CONEMUND.

VIII. COORDINATION

The evaluation team will work in coordination with CONEMUND's staff.

IX. DURATION OF CONTRACT

The duration of this contract is 4-6 weeks, in the period December 2015 and January 2016, including and estimation of 20 working days, excluding the travel period.

X. PLACE OF EXECUTION OF WORK

Muong Thai commune, Phu Yen district, Son La province / Hanoi.

XI. TYPE OF CONTRACT

External evaluation, without employer-employee relationship (i.e., not subject to any obligations and benefits in the context of full-time employment) according to Vietnamese law.

XII. PROFILE, COMPETENCIES, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

The final evaluation will be carried out by a consultancy team (2 people) with a background in identifying, formulating, monitoring and evaluating projects and/or international cooperation for development programs.

- It must include one expert with a minimum of 6 years of experience in the field of rural economic

development in agricultural and market access. Experience in gender focus will be valued. Experience in evaluation, formulation, and/or project management and development programs of at least 5 years, and solid knowledge around evaluation methodologies in development interventions. Background in evaluation work in Southeast Asia, specifically in Vietnam, will be positively considered as part of the evaluating team.

- Fluency in English and Vietnamese is imperative.
- The team will ensure the capacity to analyse all the aspects included in the Project's objectives, technical as well as operational.
- The team leader will always play as interlocutor and representative.
- Any change in the establishment of the evaluating team must be previously notified to CONEMUND, which will request CONEMUND's corresponding authorization.

XIII. CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND PUBLICATION

The contract will be signed by CONEMUND's Country Representative in Vietnam and the consultant(s).

XIV. COST AND TERMS OF PAYMENTS

This will be a lump sum contract payable as follows:

- 40% at inception report acceptance by CONEMUND's Country Representative
- 60% on acceptance of the final report and after the review of all the expenditures and supporting documents of the evaluation

The total working days and consultancy fees will be negotiated and applied following CONEMUND's cost norms. The total cost of the services must be subject to taxes according to Vietnamese law.

To process each payment, the evaluating team has to provide an invoice to be attached to the contract to the financial department of CONEMUND.

XV. CONFIDENTIALITY

CONEMUND and the contractor will agree that, except as may be required by law, any information relating to the affairs, vendors, finances, properties, methods of operations, programs and documentation pertaining to participants received during or after the term of this agreement is confidential and such information will not be released or disclosed without the prior written consent of each party. The contractor must protect the design, tools, database and reports under the current contract which remain the property of CONEMUND; CONEMUND will own all data collected. The contractor has to keep strictly confidential, even after termination of this contract, all matters which come to his/her knowledge during the duration of the agreement under this contract. The Consultant commits not to resell, redistribute or share any of the information to the third party nor reuse any of the information for personal benefits.

The application should include CVs of consultants, technical and economic proposal and must be presented in electronic format before 1st of December, 2015 to the following email addresses:

ines.ramos@conemund.org and conemund@conemund.org

Please indicate in the mail subject "MID-TERM EVALUATION- SON LA PROJECT".