



UN VOLUNTEER DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT

Preamble:

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers.

In most cultures volunteerism is deeply embedded in long-established, ancient traditions of sharing and support within the communities. In this context, UN Volunteers take part in various forms of volunteerism and play a role in development and peace together with co-workers, host agencies and local communities.

In all assignments, UN Volunteers promote volunteerism through their action and conduct. Engaging in volunteer activity can effectively and positively enrich their understanding of local and social realities, as well as create a bridge between themselves and the people in their host community. This will make the time they spend as UN Volunteers even more rewarding and productive.

1. UNV Assignment Title: **Agriculture and Rural Development Programme Officer**

2. Type of Assignment:

International UN Volunteer /Int/

National UN Volunteer /___/

3. Project Title: **Agricultural bio--diversity**

4. Duration: **One year**

5. Location, Country: **Vientiane, Lao PDR**

6. Expected Starting Date: **As soon as possible**

7. Brief Project Description: FAO is one of the oldest development partners in the country. It has collaborated with the Government since the establishment of the Lao PDR on 2nd December 1975. FAO provides assistance to the Lao Government and to its people based on the Lao Government's vision and National Socio -Economic Development Plan (NSED). FAO interventions are designed within its Country Programming Frame taking into account the Government's development strategies for agriculture, rural development and food security and in FAO's commitments under UNDAF.

Agricultural biological diversity (agrobiodiversity) plays a significant economic role in Lao PDR, where rural people rely on a large and varied number of species for their diet. Unsustainable farming intensification and the conversion of land for mono-cropping and plantations, however, is reducing the diversity of crop, livestock and wild species - and many local varieties of rice and other crops have been displaced by improved varieties with greater needs for agrochemicals. In uplands, wild relatives of rice and other terrestrial and aquatic species are at risk from changes in land use and agro-ecosystems.

Improving the contribution of agrobiodiversity through enhancing knowledge and improving management capacity in the agricultural sector were identified in the Lao PDR National Agricultural Biodiversity Programme (2004) as national priorities of the Lao Government. Building upon this, UNDP, FAO and the Lao PDR Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) developed the project "Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Agriculture and Land Management in Lao PDR's Policies Programmes and Plans" (in short "Agrobiodiversity Project" (ABP)). The ABP project was approved for GEF funding in December 2010 and started its operation (UNDP NIM) in mid 2011. The inception report was approved by MAF in January 2012. The project works strategically with central government, local authorities, agribusiness sector, NGO, farmers, donors, other projects, and the general public to make biodiversity a key consideration in routine

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PO Box 260 111 53153 Bonn Germany Telephone +49.228.815-2000 Fax +49.228.815-2001

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day-to-day decision making. The objective of the ABP is to provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agrobiodiversity within farming systems of Lao PDR. The project's three outcomes are:

- Outcome 1: National policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable use, and *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems;
- Outcome 2: Capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agrobiodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels; and
- Outcome 3: Effective project management.

In addition to agro-biodiversity, FAO is actively assisting Lao PDR in a range of policy and programme activities in the crop, livestock, forestry, fisheries and natural resource management sectors, as well as in a cross-sectoral concerns of food and nutrition security, climate change, sustainable development and gender issues.

FAO has recently finalized the Country Programming Framework (CPF), which outlines the joint Government of Lao PDR (GoL) and FAO medium-term priorities for FAO technical assistance in Lao PDR over the period 2013-2015. The CPF priorities for Lao PDR are as follows:

1. Improved food and nutritional security through enhanced resource productivity for food-insecure farm households
2. Environmentally sustainable production for the market by small farmers using value chain approach
3. Sustainable natural resource management for crops, forests, fisheries and livestock
4. Reduced risk and vulnerability to natural and other disasters through prevention, preparedness and response.

The FAO Representation hopes to strengthen its team with a UNV Agriculture and Rural Development Programme Officer. He/she will be responsible in programme development in line with the CPF and national development priorities, and build on the past and ongoing work of FAO in Lao PDR. The UNV Programme Officer will also provide technical and operational support to various FAO projects and programmes.

8. Host Agency/Host Institute: FAO Representation, Lao PDR

9. Organizational Context:

FAO has good working relationships with Government counterparts from Agriculture, Health, Environment and the Planning and Investment sectors, with its specialized competencies, providing technical assistance. The UNV Agriculture and Rural Development Programme Officer is expected to work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the National Disaster Management Office. The main government counterpart for FAO is the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. He/she will also collaborate with colleagues from WFP, UNDP and UNICEF as well as with UN Habitat, UNODC, UNIDO, and WHO when relevant. The UNV will also liaise with IFIs, INGOs, Not-for-Profit Associations (NPA), mass organizations and private sector working in FAO related activities and work. He/she will be based in the FAO Representation Office in Vientiane Capital.

10. Type of Assignment Place: assignment with family/ without family (please choose)

11. Description of tasks:

Under the direct supervision of FAO Representative, the UN Volunteer will assist the FAO Representation in carrying out the following tasks:

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General:

- Analyze and keep abreast of general development in socio-economic and agricultural and food security context, Government of Lao PDR's (GoL) national development strategies and priorities, in particular with reference to sustainable agriculture, rural development and natural resource management;
- Analyze and assess Lao PDR's development assistance picture, donor country policies and programme priorities;

Policy / Programme:

- Monitor and analyze key economic, agriculture, rural development and food security issues in Lao PDR, prepare country brief and agriculture sector profile, and contribute to the identification of policy assistance priorities for Lao PDR;
- Provide support to the FAO Representation in programme development, including identification of project ideas and their appraisal, preparation of concept notes and project documents/proposals;
- Assist the FAO Representation developing and reviewing technical cooperation programmes for Lao PDR in accordance with agriculture development priorities and framework;
- Participate in missions for both the identification, formulation and negotiation of potential FAO programs, policies and projects, including monitoring and evaluation;
- Assist the host country Government in the formulation of terms of reference, concept notes, and project documents/project briefs for international technical cooperation, as requested;

Coordination / Partnerships:

- Support project staff, consultants and partner missions (i.e. liaising with relevant government counterparts and development partners, organizing programme missions, etc.);
- Assist the FAO Representation Office in its coordination activities by responding to their requests and acting as focal point within FAO, and FAO's participation in inter-agency working groups and development forums;
- Actively participate in interagency assessments and assist in data/information analysis to identify gaps and sectoral intervention;
- Participate in the UNDAF Outcome Group meetings and reporting on FAO contribution to UNDAF Outputs;
- Provide support when necessary to FAO Representation's participation in joint UN actions/activities and national/multilateral strategies and processes (i.e. UN Country Team)

Information and Knowledge Management:

- Coordinate the collection, consolidation and maintenance of country data on food, crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries including information on external aid in FAO's corporate systems and monitor changes in national policies affecting the agricultural sector
- Support the regular exchange of information on agriculture, rural development, food security and poverty issues in Lao PDR among interested ministries, agencies and FAO Project Staff

Other:

- Perform additional assignments as requested by the supervisor

Furthermore, UN Volunteers are encouraged to:

- Strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the concept of volunteerism by reading relevant UNV and external publications and take active part in UNV activities (for instance in events that mark IVD);
- Be acquainted with and build on traditional and/or local forms of volunteerism in the host country;
- Reflect on the type and quality of voluntary action that they are undertaking, including participation in ongoing reflection activities;
- Contribute articles/write-ups on field experiences and submit them for UNV publications/websites, newsletters, press releases, etc.;

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- Assist with the UNV Buddy Programme for newly-arrived UN Volunteers;
- Promote or advise local groups in the use of online volunteering, or encourage relevant local individuals and organizations to use the UNV Online Volunteering service whenever technically possible.

12. Results/Expected Output:

- Strengthen FAO technical assistance through the design, formulation, operation and programming of activities, creation of strategic partnerships and achieving resource mobilization targets;
- Successful implementation, management and delivery of FAO projects/programmes in Lao PDR;
- Contributed to enhanced understanding and documentation of issues to strengthen sustainable agriculture and rural development policy and programme impacts;
- A final statement of achievements towards volunteerism for development during the assignment, such as reporting on the number of volunteers mobilized, activities participated in and capacities developed.

13. Qualifications/Requirements:

- Master's degree in Agriculture and Rural Development, Economics, Public Policy, Social / Political Sciences, Development Studies, or other relevant discipline;
- Experience in the specific development programme area associated to this post such as agriculture and rural development projects, programmes and policy analysis, and with a good understanding of policy development;
- Knowledge on and capacity to learn about the human rights based approach in the UN system, rural socio economic development, nutrition, food security and poverty issues, natural resources management, sustainable development agenda (CSD);
- Basic knowledge of relevant institutional mandates, policies, guidelines, and international donor system is an advantage;
- Experience working with development projects/programmes and coordination and/or in LDC countries;
- Computer literacy and ability to use effectively word processing (Windows, Excel, Word) and modern communication tools (Internet, LAN, email, Website surfing and related software).

Competencies

- Ability to develop professional networks; coordination skills
- Ability to analyze technical issues, to write in English, clear and concise reports and project documents, and to make effective oral presentations.
- Grasp of substantive development policy environment (UNDAF, MDGs, donor priorities, Round Table Mechanism, etc.)
- Good organizational and interpersonal skills
- Working knowledge of English (Level C)
- Limited knowledge of Lao language or a commitment to learn Lao
- Good communication and networking skills
- Willingness and ability to engage productively in multi cultural environment with different levels of government, private sector, CSO's, INGOs, UN agencies
- Initiative and sense of responsibility
- Gender awareness and knowledge of critical gender issues to be mainstreamed in agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, programs and projects
- Knowledge on and capacity to learn about the human rights based approach as applied in the UN system

14. Living Conditions:

- The position will be based in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. Living conditions in Vientiane are relatively good. However, in light of lack of adequate availability of health services, the level of hardship in the duty station is classified as C (hardship). Security is also reasonably good in Vientiane.

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15. Conditions of Service

A 12-month contract; monthly volunteer living allowance (VLA) intended to cover housing, basic needs and utilities, equivalent to US\$ 1,933 for single person; US\$ 2,183 for persons with one recognized depended; US\$ 2,383 for persons with two or more recognized dependents; settling-in-grant (if applicable); life, health, and permanent disability insurance; return airfares (if applicable); resettlement allowance for satisfactory service.

Description of Assignment prepared by the UNV Field Unit/UN Agency:

Mr Puru, Head of Agency, FAO

Date: 25/01/13

Description of Assignment approved by UNDP/RR/CD or UNV Field Unit: *Carla UNV PO*

Date: 25/01/13